MANOHAR PRABHAKAR

# CULTURAL HERITAGE OF RAJASTHAN

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PANCHSHEEL PRAKASHAN, JAIPUR

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# PREFACE

The present work is mainly based on a number of my articles published from time to time in the leading English newspapers and periodicals of the country including the Illustrated Weekly of India, Modern Review, The Hindu, Hindusthan Standard, Amrit Bazar Patrika, Free Press Journal, Sunday Standard, Deccan Herald, Patriot, Indian Nation, Nagpur Times, Tribune etc. In order to arrange these miscellaneous writings in a coherent manner for bringing out in book form, Some material derived chiefly from the publications of the Directorate of Census Operations and the Rajasthan District Gazetteers has also been incorporated not unoften using the words of the original contributors. Due acknowledgements to this effect have been recorded at the appropriate places.

The author's labour involved in this humble attempt will be amply rewarded if it could stimulate the interest of competent scholars to undertake a systematic study of the various cultural aspects of this colourful land.

I am extremely grateful to the various authors from whose works I have extensively quoted in preparing the present text. My cordial thanks are also due to Shri M. C. Gupta, Proprietor of Panchsheel Prakashan without whose inspiration and insistance this work would not have seen the light of the day so soon.

**Manohar Prabhakar**

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# 1

# GLIMPSES OF YESTERDAYS

The very name of Rajasthan conjures up a picture of a classic land with its chequered history of chivalry, romance, sagas and sacrifices. While this land of lores and legends can take just pride of producing a galaxy of gallant warriors and heroes. it can equally claim the credit of cradling a countless number of poets, painters, sculptors and literary luminaries. C. V. Raman had aptly described it as an 'island of glory.'[1]

Prior to tha dawn of independence, Rajasthan never existed as an integrated political entity. However, the centuries old traditions flourished in various parts of this region generated a sense of cultural unity which ultimately constituted the spritual basis of the present state. Epigraphic and other documentary evidences indicate that in different periods of Indian history its various divisions were known by different names. The northern semi-arid area of the state was known as Jangala in the Mahabharata period and continued to be identified by this name till the modern times. The rainless region of the west was addressed as Maru as is evident from the chain of references in Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brahatsamhita, Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman of 150 A. D. and later literature. Shrimadbhagavata also tells of a territory christened as Marudhanva which was probably the semi-arid area between the Maru proper and tbe Aravalis extending from the present Jhunjhnu district in the north-east to Jalore in the south-west. The range of Aravalis lying from south-west to north-east as a diagonal across Rajasthan was called as Arbudavali in ancient times. The eastern plains and hilly territory were divided into eight traditional settlements including Matsya, Pushkaravana, Nishadabhumi, Surasena, Bhoja, Madhyamika, Mahiyaka and Avanti. Out of these, first three were primarily in the hilly Area. Matsya is frequently mentioned in the Rgveda, Satapatha Brahmana and Mahabharata. In mahabharata period its capital was Virata, now popularly known as Bairath in Jaipur district.

The Surasena Janapada occuring in Mahabharata had although its head quarters at Mathura yet its boundaries extended in the south upto chambal and in the west upto the plains below the Aravalis near Alwar.

Across the Surasena Janapada was the settlement of Bhojas who are said to have greeted Arjun on his way to Dwarka.

Then, in the eastern slopes of the Aravalis existed the pushkaravana once dwelt by the Utsavasanketas who were subjected by Nakula.

To the south of the Pushkaravana was the Nishadbhumi or the territory of the aboriginals. Because of its location in the east of the Aravalis it was later known as Pragvata and ultimately came to be known as Medapata or Mewar.

The area around chittor was called Madhyamika which was presumably the original home of the Sungas. According to the Puranas, the southern tract drained by Mahi was the land of the Mahiyakas and it seems that the river gave this name to the people.

The aforesaid divisions are more or less based on traditional accounts collected from epics and the Puranas. In historic times, a number of changes took place from time to time and the geographical limits of this vast land kept expanding or contracting according to the varying political setting. For instance, while Maru and Jangala survived in the medieval period, the area comprising of Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Nagaur assumed the new name of Sapadlaksha. Similarly, what was known as Pragvata in olden times came to be called as Mewar and the former division of

Pushkarvana after the entery of the Mers began to be known as Merwara. Thus Rajasthan never had one nominclature. When the Mughals made their debut on the Indian political stage, they found Rajputs ruling over this territory and gave it the collective denomination of Rajputan in Persian which was furher corrupted to Rajputana by the British. The Rajputs called their kingdom's head quarters as Rayathana. Nensi, the renowned chronicler of Rajasthan has used this word in the sense of capital. An inscription of 1708 A. D. in the Sardar museum and the authors of Rajrupaka and Ajayavilas in the eigtheenth century go to suggest that the word ·Rajasthan' is evidently of recent origin. In the physical context, col. Tod was the first to introduce this word which soon got into currency.[2]

The course of history in Rajasthan has remained invariably related to the rise, recession and resurgence of Rajput power. It will, therefore, be quite appropriate to give here a few glimpses of the historical back ground of the State.

Taking a panoramic view, the entire country after the death of Harsa was parcelled into various small Rajput kingdoms which were further slashed to smaller baronies in accordance with Rajput feudal system. These petty kings and still pettier barons fought either among themselves or with the remnants of aboriginal and foreign tribes. The country side in all probability was strewn with bands of broken men who had been driven out of their homes and with gangs of robbers and plunderers.[3] People were utterly indifferent to political developments. They had no concern with the barons and their battles. Expansion or contraction of political boundary meant no more to them than district boundary means to their descendants today. It merely determined the direction in which they had to go to pay taxes and a change of rulers to them was just a change of tax collectors.

While this atmosphere of political apathy on the part of the common people was obtaining in the country, the Rajputs appeared on the political scene of Rajasthan in the 7th century.[4] Gradually, they occupied the south, the south western, the north western and north eastern corners of the land till the end of the 12th century. Demonstrating determination and fortitude they spread from these centres in different directions and held practically the whole of Rajasthan towards the tapering of the fourteenth century,[5]

During the 15th century, they passed through a period of varying fortunes with their frontiers now receding and then again advancing a little. However, this period (1200 A. D. to 1567 A. D.) of Rajasthan's history is a glorious record of almost four hundred year long daring and dauntless resistance against the Turko-Afghan invaders from the north-west and the expansionist designs of the Sultans of Delhi, Gujarat and Malwa. These four centuries of independence and sovereignty when Rajasthan accepted the challenge of the Sultanas of Delhi, Malwa and Gujarat constituted the brightest period of Rajasthan's history. It was during this era that the Hindu way of life, culture, literature and arts flourished.[6]

Towards the beginning of the 16th century when the edifice of the last Afghan dynasty at Delhi was cracking up and Malwa and Gujarat were at war with each other, the celebrated Rana Sanga of Mewar at this juncture made a successful attempt of consolidating and strenghthening Rajput power.

In 1519 he captured the Musalman king of Malwa and eventually subdued Malwa State and annexed to his own dominion all the eastern provinces of that kingdom. This was the time at which the power of the Rajputs was at its zenith for Rana Sanga was now not merely the chief of a clan but king of the country.[7] The revival of Rajput power, was, however, as shortlived as it was brilliant. A month before the capture of the capital of Malwa, Babar with his Mughals had taken Delhi, and in 1527, Rana Sanga encountered the invader at Khanwa where his army was utterly defeated after desperate fighting and the Rajput power hopelessly shattered. The Rajput clans harassed first by the attacks of Muslman king of Gujarat, then by the Afghan sher Shah of Delhi, were either finally conquered, over awed, or concilliated by the genius of the great Akbar except the distant Sisodia clan of Mewar which also submitted to Jahangir in 1616.[8] This period of subjugation by the Mughal emperors continued till the time of Aurangjeb.

A judicious view of the state of affairs will reveal that this loss of freedom was, however, adequately compensated. On one hand the Rajput rulers enjoyed full autonomy in their individual states under the Mughal suzerainty while on the other their inter-state warfare and dynastic conflicts had come to an end. The atmosphere of internal peace and order and feelling of protection from external danger contributed considerably to raise the level of economic and cultural progress in the region. The brith of third fateful period of Rajasthan's history coincides with the decline of the Mughal empire and the beginning of Maratha incursion into Northern India and it ends with the establisnment of British paramountcy in the country. The fourth eventful era commenced with the British rule in India and came to an end with the attainment of freedom by India on August 15, 1947.[9]

It was only after the dawn of independence that the present State of Rajasthan came into being as a result of the successive mergers of as many as nineteen princely states and three chiefships.[10]

This Kaliedoscopic view of the political setting in Rajasthan explains the circumstances that led to the development of various social sheds and cultural contours in the State.

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## 2

# PHYSIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT

Since physiographical features tremendously influence the stream of the life of the people and determine to a great extent their social structure and cultural traditions, it will be pertinent to present here a portrait of the natural setting of the State. The Aravali hilis which dominate the landscape of this colourful land bifurcate it into two natural divisions, namely the north-western and south-eastern Rajasthan.

The proper Aravali hills lie in the present district of Udaipur and derive the name from 'Adavala' a Rajasthani word etymologically meaning 'a beam lying across'.[1] Being one of the oldest mountain ranges of the world, these hills have been a sheltering home not only for many tribes but also for several displaced rulers during the early medieval era. It was because of the impregnability of the region that these tribes remained isolated retaining the indigenous features of their culture and developed all the characteristics of the mountaineerng inhabitants.[2] The ruling clans with their close contacts with the aboriginals and due to the impact of the rugged physical environment of the region also adopted the austere and simple ways of life devoid of any sophistication. The rugged ravines of the Aravalis also helped the Rajput rulers in giving a tough resistance to the foreign invasions. The wars of the Mewatis and those of the chiefs of Mewar and Marwar aptly exemplify the significant role played by the physical conditions of the hilly tracts in holding high the torch of their independence against heavy obstacles.[3]

**North-Western region**

To the west and north-west of the Aravalis lies the area of shifting sand dunes crawling iike a serpent.[1] Practically destitute of rivers, this region is a vast expanse of wind-blown sand and is very sparsely populated. The western part of this sandy tract is known as Thar which was once a fertile land irrigated by the waters of the much belauded rivers, Saraswsti and Drsadvati in tha Vedas and was the centre of our two best known civilizations. Excavations in the western part of the erstwhile Bikaner State have proved the existence of many Harappan settlements. But gone are those days of greenery. Today, shimmering heat waves dance over the barren land and mirages feign non-existent waters in the most part of the region. The miseries of the people and their hard life in this region of desolate dunes have been well delineated in a sequence of Dhola–Maru, the famous love-lyric of Rajasthan wherein Malwani, the first wife of Dhola sarcastically speaks of the dreadful desert to Maravani (second wife of Dhola from poogal) in the following words:—

"My God, Maru is such a country where water can be had only from deep wells, and where at midnight moaning voices of Khakhara ( fatigue relieving cry of men working at wells ), are heard as if somebody is dead.........where for the sake of drawing water husband leaves wife at the dead of night.........where water does not feel ( at the ghats of tanks and baolis as in Malwa ), the soft touch of fair damsels of kunkum (bright red) complexion.

"Baba, Do not give me in marriage to a Maruan—(equivalent of Calcutta Mero, applied to all up-country people, particularly from Marwar)—, who are rustic simpletons preoccupied with their flocks, with whom I shall have to live in the Thar, and go about wlth a kuhrada (hatchet to cut brambles for fuel) on my shoulders; a ghada ( water vessel of earth ) on my head, and in my hand kachoula ( a saucer to collect water for filling the pot). I should rather remain a kunwari than be thrown to die of drudgery in carrying water in such a country, where piyuna serpents abound, where the karil and unt-kantra ( thorny camel shrub ) pass for trees; where ak and phog ( shrubs of dwarfish wild berry ) only provide shade; where the bread of bhurat (eaten even now) satisfies hunger.

"O Maru ! your country is a land of unrelieved calamities having either a uchala ( a temporary migration bag and baggage in years of scarcity ) or scanty rains (abarasan), or a visitation of locusts (tiddi); a country where blankets are only available to serve as upper and lower garments (pahiran audan); where water lies in a depth of sixty puris; where people are nomads knowing no other delicacies except the milk of sheep and goats."[5]

Walter Hamilton has also given a graphic account of this sandy region. He observes : "Among these suffocating sand hills, a miserable village is sometimes met with, consisting of a few round straw huts, with low sides and conical roofs, like little stooks of corn, surrounded by hedges of dry thorny branches; the whole extremely combustible. Surrounding these abodes of misery are a few fields, depending for moisture on dews and the periodical rains, cultivated with crops of the poorest kinds of pulse and of bajra, or holcus spicatus, which last is raised with great difficulty. The wells are often 300 feet deep, and one in particular was found to be 345 feet; yet with this enormous descent, some are only 3 feet in diameter. An examination of the strata penetrated would be a curious and useful research. The water procured with so much trouble is always brackish, unwholesome, and extremely small in quantity. Two bullocks working one night can with ease empty a well. These wells are lined with masonry, and on the occurrence of any exigence by being covered with boards heaped over with sand, can be effectually concealed by the natives from their enemies, so that a scarcity of water is at once a cause of woe and of protection. In the midst of these burning sands, the most juicy of all fruits, the water melon, is found in astonishing profusion, growing from a small stalk not thicker than that of the comon melon and attaining the circumference of 3 and 4 feet. The optical illusion, termed mirage by the French, is common in this desert and deceives travellers with the appearance of an extensive lake amidst parched and arid sands."[6]

This dismal picture is, however, fast changing as a result of the implementation of the Rajasthan canal project which seeks the transformation of this dreadful desert.

The eastern part of this region known as Marwar is equally sandy, sterile and inhospitable. It is a dreary waste covered with sand hills and very rarely watered. Although nature has not been bountiful to this area yet its strategic importance has always been reckoned with.

The sandy topography of this area contributed greatly in keeping it practically independent and it was considered unfit for permanent settlement. The following observations of Dr. Dasharath Sharma throw sufficient light on how the geographical pecularities of this well-known sandy tract moulded the course of Indian History.

"Marusthali or the Desert Area provided refuge to the Rastrakutas or Rathores and assisted Jodhaji Rathore and his successors in carving out a mighty kingdom in the sandy tract of Marwar. Even sher Shah rued the day he marched into Marwar and declared that he had come very near losing an empire for a handful of millets. And this also was the experience of many others who invaded Rajasthan. The Ghaznavite army, which invaded Ajmer in Arnoraja's region was destroyed not only by the valour of Chauhan soldiers but the dust laden hot winds of Rajasthan, as it retreated northwards after its defeat on the grounds now submerged by Anasagar lake. The formidable army of Mahadji Sindhia was routed at lalsot in 1787, as it lost its bearing in the trackless sands. Provided by nature with two kinds of forts, the dhanva-durga (areas inaccessible on account of their sands) and giri-durgas ( hill forts ) like Chittor Jodhpur, Jalore and Jaisalmer, Rajasthanis always had some advantage over other Indian fighters for freedom. Here small forces were cut down by the mobile Rajput cavalry and the bigger ones perished for want of food and water".[7]

## South-Eastern Region

In contrast to the sandy plains of Western Rajasthan the southern and eastern divisions of Rajasthan have a diversified character. Southern Rajasthan contains extensive hill ranges, wide vales, forests and fertile table lands.

In the back-drop of the loftiest part of the Aravalis between Mount Abu and Ajmer lies the Mewar terriory renowned for its scenic beauty and chivalry of its people.

The Eklinga inscription extolling the physical charm of Mewar describes it as an abode of all that is pleasant and fascinating in the world.[8] A similar inscription of Achaleshwar narrates its beauty in the most poetic fashion saying that it excels paradise itself and that its splendour and grandeur have deprived all other places and their inhabitants of their glamour and glory. The beauty of natural surroundings conditioned to a very great extent the development of imaginative faculties in the people, their taste for beaufiful objects and love for all that is decent in life.[9]

Where the descent of the western slopes of the Aravalis is abrupt towards Jodhpur, on the eastern or Udaipur side the land falls vary gradually as it recedes from the long parallel ridges which mark the water parting until it spreads out and settles down into an open champaign. The whole of the region is watered by the drainage of the Aravali hills, carried north-eastward by the Banas and Chambal rivers.

Dotted by dense forests and wild woods perhaps the most scenic site of Rajasthan is the district of Banswara.

It looks best just after the rains when "the varied hues of tha foliage, the luxuriant growth of the tall grasses, and the streams dashing down the hills sides or pushing through shady glens, between banks fringed with ferns and flowers, present a most pleasing picture."

The surface of the eastern region including the districts of Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Kotah, Bundi etc. is crossed and diversified by groups and ranges of hills by isolated peaks and by elevated table lands. Many parts of this region are fairly level and open too. Towards the west the region consists in a great measure of broad, open treeless plains, and in the east and south east the region is mostly covered with alluvium and bush jungles.

## Rivers and Lakes

It is a historical fact that rivers form the foundation of civilization. The banks of the great rivers of the earth have been cradles where first civilizations of the world grew up into maturity.

In our country, a river has always been held in reverence as the benefactor of every Indian irrespective of where he may be borne or where he may live. The following pauranic prayer is repeated daily by millions of masses all over the country while taking their bath in a river.

> 'Gange cha Yamune chaiva, Godavari Saraswati I
> Narmade, Sindhu, Kaveri Jalesmine, Sannidhima Kuru II
>
> (Ye Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasavati,
> Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri come ye and
> enter into this water of my offering.)[11]

Rivers in Rajasthan have played a significant role in moulding the surface features of this region and its socio-cultural life. The river of any consequence in Western Rajasthan is Luni ('salt river' the Lonawari or Lovanavari of Sanskrit writers ) which flows for about 200 miles from the Pushkar valley to its embouchure in the great western salt march—the Rann of Cutch. It receives the drainage brought by the mountain torrents down the western slopes of the Aravali hills between Ajmer and Abu, and is a veritable blessing to the southern parts of Jodhpur Division. There is a saying in Marwar that about half of the agricultural produce of the area is the gift of the luni.

Another worth mentioning river is Ghaggar which once flowed through the northern part of Bikaner division but it is now dry except in the rains.

The important rivers in Southern Rajasthan are rhe Banas (Hope of the Forest), the Chambal and the Mahi. The Banas rises in the Aravali hills in Udaipur Division and after a tortuous course of about 300 miles falls into the Chambal. The Mahi enters Southern Rajasthan, and flows in a northerly direction with a some what tortuous course, till it reaches the Udaipur fronter where it is soon turned by the Mewar hills to the south-west. In the eastern side, Banganga is the main river rising from Jaipur and flowing through Bharatpur and Dholpur to join Yamuna.

Excepting the salt lakes of Sambhar and Didwana, Rajasthan is demonstrably deprived of natural lakes. However, it has the privilege of possessing a pretty large number of beautiful artifical lakes.

Revealing to many may be the fact that Jaisamand, also known as 'Dhebar' situated 34 miles south-east from the historic city of Udaipur, is one of the largest artificial lakes of the world. This lake with an area of 21 sq miles is surrounded by beautiful hills and has seven small islands in the midst of the cool and placid waters which are inhabited by Bhils and Minas.

Another picturesque lake of Mewar, is the Rajsamand, about 4 miles long and 1¾ miles broad adorning the pious feet of Lord Dwarka dheesh, a well-known shrine of Vallabh sect of Vaishnawas at Kankroli. The story of its construction dates back to the later half of the seventeenth century when Maharaja Rajsingh, the then ruler of Mewar started it as a relief work for the famine-striken people. Constructed at a heavy cost of over Rs. 158 lakhs, its dam is nearly 1,000 feet in length, entirely covered with white marble steps. The northern part of the dam, or 'Nochowki' as it is popularly known is about 200 yards long and 70 yards broad paved with marble and spotted with exquisitely built Chhatteries. There is a famous inscription in Sanskrit comprising of 1017 verses on 25 slabs depicting the history of Mewar, and it is stated to be the biggest literary work inscribed on stone slates dated as far as 1675.

The picturesqe lake of Pichhola about 2½ miles broad which bounds the city of Udaipur, according to a legend, was constructed by a banjara in the 15th century during the reign of maharnalakha (1382–1421). The embankment of this fascinating lake is reached through a series of beautiful gardens, of the palaces, now named the Sajjan Niwas, and from there a round runs part the Dudh Talai down the east side of the lake to the Odikhas built by the late Chief at its southern end for use as a shooting box. Beautiful as the lake is when seen from the palaces' another points, the view on it near the route's end with the cabbed islands and the lofty palace and city in the distance, is one of still greater loneliness. The southern island is named the Jagmandir and is mainly notable for the Gul Mahal, a domed pavilion. It was here that Khurram later known as Shahjahan lived when in revolt against his father, the emperor Jahangir and the refugee ladies from Neemuch were protected in 1857 A. D.

In Marwar, the pride of place is held by Balsamand and Sardar Samand lakes of Jodhpur, while the Nakki lake at Mount Abu is the centre of attraction for the tourists.

How water has been magnified and glorified in this sandy region of India is evident from the Pushkar lake, a prominent place of pilgrimage situated seven miles away from Ajmer. According to Padma Purana which mentions that Brahma, the creater performed a yagya here, Pushkar is as old as the universe itself. References in the epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata also bear testimony to its antiquity. It is also believed that the Pandavas while in exile, spent some of the years here. The Ashram of Kanva Rishi referred to in the 'Abhigyan Shakuntlam' of Kalidasa is also said to have situated somewhere near Pushkar.

The Pushkar lake located at the other side of the Nag Pahar is surrounded on all sides by ghats presenting picturesque sceneries.

Another alluring beauty-spot in Ajmer is the arificial 'Anasagar' lake costructed by king Arnoraja (about 1135 to 1150 A. D.), the grand-father of the famous Hindu emperor Prithvi Raj Chauhan. The lake formed by an embankment between two hills, when full, has a circumference of eight miles surrounded by hills with the lofty Nag Pahar as its background. "It is perhaps the greatest of the various national beauties", says Dr. Fuhver, "that continue to make Ajmer one of the old native cities of India."

Like Pushkar is the famous holy resort of Galta, a natural gorge located in the east of Jaipur, the pink city of India. Over the crest of the ridge on a rocky platform is a temple dedicated to the Sun God. At the foot of the first incline of the gorge is a perennial spring which flows through a succession of tarraced pools. Picturesque shrines and pinnacles deck the entire valley[12]

In the context of rivers and lakes, mention may be made of a few gardens also which have undoubtedlv lent colour to the natural surroundings of their area. The Mughal gardens of Deeg near Bharatpur, Saheliyon Ki Badi in Udaipur, Mandor Garden of Jodhpur and Ramniwas Garden of Jaipur are the living monuments of Man's effort to create beauty in the barren sands.

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## 3

# SOCIAL SPECTRUM

The populace of Rajasthan is a product of the transplantation enmasse or in bands of more or less migratory people trom the desert and the steppe--land of central Asia and the Iranian plateau, imposing themselves upon people who had become rooted in the soil, usually ousting them but assimilating to some degree the main features of the previous existing civilisations infusing their own particular characteristics as developed in new physiological and social environments and then, in turn, rising up against the next, invaders, but usually getting vanquished and assimilated.[1] From the very early times, there were so many penetrations by the various tribes that it is difficult even to define the authentic character or the peoples of Rajasthan of any given period.[2]

While it is no purpose of the present study to probe into the origin of any class of people, an attempt will be made here to describe in brief the major castes and tribes of Rajasthan.

### Brahmans

The Brahmans as in other parts of the country occupy top position in the pyramid of social hiearchy in Rajasthan. Regarded as the custodians of Hindu culture, they are divided into several sections and sub-sections and are found in all parts of the land. Besides performing priestly functions, they are now engaged in agriculture, trade and service too.

## Rajputs

The Rajputs are the descendants of the renowned Kshatriyas who find mention in ancient Sanskrit literature. They are the traditional protectors of the weak, the cows and the Brahmins and defenders of the country. There are numerous mythological stories about the origin of the Kshatriyas which form a part of many volumes of the ancient Sanskrit literature.

There are 36 Rajput clans tracing their mythical descent from the Sun, the Moon and the sacred Fire. They are known respectively as Suryavansis, Chandravansis, and Agnivansis.

The Rajput's pride, valour, patriotism, and undisputed addiction to his own concept of honour through the centuries, received glowing testimonials. Speaking before the Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference in London, on November 17, 1931, Gandhiji said : "Then there are the Rajputs who are supposed to be responsible for a thousand Thermopylaes and not one little Thermopylae as in Greece. That is what the Englishman Colonel Tod told us. Colonel Tod has taught us to believe that every pass in Rajputana is a Thermopylae. Do these people stand in need of learning the arts of defence ?"[3]

Referring to the Rajputs, Jawaharlal Nehru in his Discovery of India wrote: "Some of the proud Rajput clans trace back their geneology to prehistoric times. The Maharana of Udaipur, of the race of Sun, has family tree comparable to that of the Mikado of Japan."

Tod, in his Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan has also paid the most unusual compliment to the Rajputs when he said: "The Rajput chieftains were imbued with all the kindred virtues of the Western cavalier, ( and they were far ) suprior in mental attainments."

## Vaishyas

The mercantile community of Vaishyas occupies an important place in the social order of Rajasthan. Endowed with an extra-ordinary business acumen the members of this caste are scattered in almost all leading industrial towns of India contributing to the economic growth of the country.

The Vaishyas are also divided into sub castes and gotras. The Agarwals, Khandelwals, Oswals and Maheshwaris are the main sub-divisions of the Vaishya Community. The Vaishyas of Shekhavati area have carved out for themselves a distinguished position in the world of trade and commerce in the country.

## Kayasthas

The Kayasthas have been classified as a caste allied to Kshatriyas, Rajputs and Khatris. This community has played a significant role in the sphere of administration in Rajasthan. They are divided into many sections including Mathur, Bhatnagar, Srivastava, Saxena etc. and are mostly employed in Government service. The Kayasthas have made substantial contribution in the field of education also.

## Jats

The Jats form a considerable part of the population of Rajasthan. The legend regarding their origin is that they have sprung from the jatas or locks of god Shiva and hence they were called Jats. Ibbetson considered the Jats to be the descendants of the Rajputs. According to him the Jats and the Rajputs have common origin and the difference between them is only social. Conningham considers Rajputs to be the descendants of the Aryans and Jats of the Scythian origin, the tribe which came to the country from the north-west. Jats are as stoutly built, healthy and strong as the Rajputs. They are best cultivators in the land and are considered to be expert agriculturists. The place where a Jat settles down is supposed to have its progress ensured:

जहां जाट वहां ठाठ [4]

The women and the children of the Jats are equally laborious and they share work with their men-folk. Their women-folk have a natural aptitude for agriculture which is illustrated by the saying "A Jat's son when he is as big as the catch of a persian wheel, has a plough-handle for a plaything." The Jat women are held in high esteem. It is said that "a persian wheel bucket and spout and a Jat woman are never superfluous, the one fertilises the field and the other populates the village". The Jats are divided into a number of Khampas or gotras.

The customs of this caste have many peculiarities. Jats, Minas and Gujars can all smoke together, eat together out of the same degchi, but not out of the same thali. They can also take women as pseudo-concubines under a curious custom called Dareja. The widows can also be sold under the same custom. The latter gives the woman a position a little better than a concubine and legitimizes any children which she may bear her master.[5]

## Bishnois

Bishnois are the followers of saint Jambhaji, a Parmar Rajput who flourished in the 15th century. The word Bishnoi is said to have been derived from bees (twenty) and nau (nine) the number of tenets preached by Jambhaji. As almost all the principles that form the ethics of the Bishnoi sect are derived from Vaishnava sect of Hindu religion, Bishnoi is considered to be a synonym for Vaishnava. Originally the Bishnois formed a cosmopolitan sect and members of any class or creed were admitted to the new cult. But with the passage of time the rigours of caste have affected the sect also; and they do not now make any new converts. Bishnois have thus formed a distinct caste.[6]

## The Tribals

The tribal society in Rajasthan mainly consists of the Bhils, Garasiyas, Minas and Sahariyas. Despite their appalling povery and predatory pattern of living, life to them is anything but a gloomy and grim affair. They are a leisurely people indifferent to oblivion into which they are sunk today and seem to know the art of living and enjoying life against all odds and vicissitudes. It will be interesting to know some of the peculiarities of their social life.

**Bhils**

The Bhils are said to be the oldest inhabitants. References to Bhils are found even in great epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana. The former refers to Ekalavya, a Bhil who had sacrificed his thumb to defray the tutorial tribute of Dronacharya the great Guru of Kauravas and the Pandavas, while the latter refers to Shabri, a Bhil woman whose hospitality was accepted by Ramachandra during his 14-year exile.

At one time, the Bhils had their small kingdoms in Gujarat, Malwa and Central India. They are also said to have been instrumental in establishing the erstwhile princely states of Kotah, Banswara and Dungarpur in Rajasthan. It is also claimed that King Dhanji of Malwa in the year 850 B.C. was a Bhil. Historians also refer to the forcible conversion of Bhils to Islam by Aurangzeb and the ruthless repression of Bhil rebellions by Ahilya Bai, the queen of Indore.

There is a great controversy about the origin of Bhils. some ethnolgists hold that they belong to the ancient tribe of Nishads while others maintain that they have originated from the Dravidian race. But the Bhils themselves believe that they have their affinity with the Rajputs. However, the Bhils dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Aravalis mostly manifest Dravidian features.

Owing their denomination to the Dravidian word 'Beel' meaning the bow, these short statured aboriginals mostly bearing dark complexion are scattered over West Khandesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajastan. According to the census report of 1941 the total population of Bhils in India was 22-1/2 lakhs. In Rajasthan alone their estimated population is over seven lakhs.

After their gradual fall during the last three centuries, the Bhils had become notoriously known for looting and plundering, but now most of them earn their livelihood by cultivation and cattle breeding. Some of them also depend upon grass-cuttig and grazing. Fishing end collecting of herbs also procure bread for some of them. Those who have shifted to the plains serve as watchmen, messengers and labourers also.

They are very easy going people and do not worry at all about the material prosperity. Once they get their meals in the course of a day, they hardly bother about the second time.

The standard of living of the Bhils is very poor. They live in huts made of thatch and bamboos on the slopes of hills, and eat mainly maize, barely and jowar. When scarcity conditions prevail, they have to depend upon only the vegetables and fruits of the jungle.

The dress of the males consists of a turban, a dhoti and a "bandi", or a long shirt, all made of coarse cloth while the women wear a skirt and a choli. The virgins generally put on white cholis. The ornaments that they wear are mostly made of brass. The children hardly put on any clothes.

Stricken with dreadful poverty they even do not have sufficient bedding for the wintry nights which they have to spend by sitting around the fire. After the advent of Independence gradually their conditions are improving. The State Department of Social Welfare is doing a great deal to ameliorate their lot. Some model localities have already been established for them in the Udaipur Division where their number is comparatively greater.

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Though the Bhils do not lead a closely-knit community life, they possess a powerful spirit of co-operation. In times of danger they flock together at the beat of drum and fight against the foe. They have coined their own code words which they use for purpose of communication on such occasions.

The Panchayat organisation is very strong among the Bhils. No one can defy the order of the Panchayat. Their localities are known as 'Pal' which consist of a number of huts. The head of the locality is called 'Gameti' meaning the leader of the village whose orders can not be challenged by anyone.

Despite changing times, the Bhils have retained their own old traditions and social customs. At the birth of the child, the mother worships the Sun-God. The ceremony of 'hair-cutting', or 'Zadoola' as they call it, also prevails. On this occasion presents are given by the friends and relations of the child's parent.

Marriage among the Bhils takes place in various ways. Sometimes a boy selects a particular girl by catching her hand at a community function, and then informs her father who gives his consent to the marriage. Similarly, when a boy elopes with a girl across a river, they are recognised as married couple. However marriages are normally settled by the parents of young boys and girls. In some cases, a father-in-law permanently keeps the groom at his own place.

Systems of divorce and widow-marriage are in vogue among the Bhils. A widow has the freedom to remarry even the younger brother of her late husband. When someone dies they cremate the body. If a woman dies during pregnancy, the child is taken out of the womb and buried into the soil, but the boy of the mother is cremated. The custom of a funeral feast is also prevalent among them. It is arranged either on the fifth day of the second half of the month in which the death occurs or on Monday, whichever suits the party.

The Bhils indulge much in drinking. This explains their deplorable economic conditions. They are very fond of the meat of wild beasts; especially the meat of the jackal.

### Hospitality

The Bhils are noted for their hospitality. If they do not have enough to eat, they would prefer to starve and feed the host first. Even at the cost of life, they take it as their sacred duty to protect the person who seeks their shelter.

Like most of the Advasis, the Bhils are very superstitious. They belive in ghosts and demons and make sacrifices to appease them.

They worship Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Besides Lord Indra, who is held in the highest esteem, the worship of Shakti and Shiva is also very popular among them.

The Bhils of Mewar also worship Rishabdha Deva, the first teerthanker of the Jains. They also worship the demi god Tejaji who, it is said, had sacrified his life to save the cows of a supportless woman from the clutches of the dacoits.

The Bhils celebrate most of the traditional Hindu festivals, but Holi and Dashera are celebrated with great eclat and enthusiasm.

## Music and Dance

The Bhils are the proud possessors of a rich cultural heritage. Important among the Bhil dances are the Ghumra, the Ger, and the Gauri Dance.

Holi puts the Bhils and their women folk in great festive mood and even with a basket and a broom they go crazy with their dances. The community character of the Ger ·dance is unique. A big drum with thalis is played and the Bhils dance in a circular motion holding sticks, and the entire population of the village joins the dance. The sound produced by the beat of drums and the striking of the sticks, is intended to imitate the words 'Gam ko Thakar' Gher ko chakar' ( Meaning that the lord of the village is a servant of the Gher ). The Gauri dance goes on from morning till evening and the Bhils depict various stories of Lord Shiva and his consort, Parvati.

Besides the dances that are presented on various auspicious occasions, there are also dances to propitiate the deities. The Bhils of Udaipur present a peculier type of dance to please Lord Indra, the God of rains. At the first sight of the clouds in the sky, they came out of their huts in batches and go on dancing till the rains shower.

Sometimes the Bhil girls singing and dancing go to the jungle in search of a healthy buffalo to be sacrified to Goddess Kali They believe that this pleases the Goddess and she, in return, bestows rains to end drought and starvation.

## Meenas

The Meenas like the Bhils, are an old, indigenous and conquered race in the east, north east and south east of Rajasthan. Their original home according to Col. Tod, was in the range of mountains called Kali Khoh, extending from Ajmer nearly to the Jamuna.

Although they had lost most of their territory the Meenas retained or regained great power even so late as Babar and Humayun appeared on the Indian scene. Their last stronghold at Naen destroyed by Bharmal or Biharimal of Amber was so mighty and powerful that an old historical couplet still keeps its memories alive:—

"Bawan Kot Chhapan Darwaja
Meena Mard Naen Ka Raja
Booro raj Naen-Ko
Jub Bhus myn bhutto mango."

(There were 52 bastions and 56 gates belonging to the manly meena, the Raja of Naen, whose sovereignty of Naen was extinct, when even of chaff ( dhus ) he took a share ).[8]

The Meenas are found throughout North West India, but their concentration is maindly in Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, Tonk and Bundi districts. Although they claim noble descent from the Matsya Avatar or the fish incarnation of Vishnu-- their numerous sects and clans into which they are divided to day speak of the dissentions and disintegration that set in the tribe since it fell from the elevated position of rulers of these territories centuries ago.

The Meenas are well built sturdy people with robust physique and stature and fine features. Fair complexioned their Women usually exemplify the saying 'health is beauty'. Courage stamina and endurance are the main characterisitics of the Meena and support their claim to ancient Kshatriya origin from the Vedic 'Mehna' which corrupted to Mena or Meena.

The Meenas are Hindus and are ranked above all the rural or hill communities. Their main Gods are Bhainroon, Hanuman and Krishna as well as the Devis, the presiding deities of their numerous clans.

In regard to occupation, the Meenas are divided into two classes, the agricultural or Baragaon Meenas and the chowkidar Meenas.

These two classes of the Meenas are also called as Purana Basi and Naya Basi. The Purana Basis are mostly agriculturists. many of them are well off in their agricultural or pastoral pursuits. The Naya Basis are poor and belong to that light fingered fraternity which is responsible for most of the burgalaries and thefts not only in Rajasthan but in all the neighbouring States as well.

The chowkidari system which entailed upon the Meenas the compulsory duty of watching the village at night and fixed their responsibility in case of thefts compeletely marred their initiative and reduced them to utter poverty. Barring few, most of the meenas have small and uneconomic holdings and famines are not infrequent in the areas inhabited by them. Conditions like this combined with their social evils such as the price for a bride, death feasts and passion for liquor have resulted in over burdening a majority of the Meenas with heavy debts.

**Girasias**

So far as the socio-economic structure is concerned, the Girasias or Garasias are very much akin to the Bhils. Despite difficult conditions of life, they are gay and easy going people.

Erskine has described the Garasias in the following words:—

"Allied to the Bhils, but ranking just above them in the social scale are the Garasias, the principal inhabitants of the Bhakar and also numerous in the Santpur and Pindwara Tehsils. According to John Malcolm, the term Girasias denotes "chiefs who were driven from their possessions by invaders and established and maintained their claim to a share of the revenue upon the ground of their power to disturb or prevent its collection". The word is derived from the Sanskrit GIRAS which signifies mouthful and "has been metaphorically applied to designate the small share of the produce of the country which these plunderers claim". The Garasias are said to have come from Mewar many centuries ago, and as they still have their internal 'Gots' or circles of affinite ( such as Parmars, Chouhan, Rathor etc. ) upon the model of a regular clan, we may perhaps assume that they are the descendants of Rajputs by Bhil women".[9]

## Gadulya Lohars[10]

Besides the tribals described in the preceding paragraphs, there are many nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes too. Among them the Gadulya Lohars or the wandering blacksmiths deserve detailed description.

On the out-skirts of a town or near a water-reservoir in the rural areas of Rajasthan, these people are frequently found taking shelter under the open sky in their bullock carts.

These gypsies have no houses, not even tents; their only protection from the scorching sun or the torrential rains is their cart beneath which they huddle and struggle against hard life. They park their bullock carts with,their men, women and children in shabby dresses and go about attending to day-to-day routine-preparing knives, scissors, sickles, axes, bolts, nails, etc.

The nomadic ways of life of these tribals is not a creation of the fact that Rajasthan offers ample scope for travelling tradesman and artisans, but an out-come of a historic decision taken almost four centuries back.

The story of Gadulya Lohars is traced back to the fall of Chittor in 1568 which was invaded by the imperial army of Akbar. Legend has it that the Gadulya Lohars who fought with Rana Pratap against the Mughal Emperor when returned to the fort to see the remnants were shocked to find that the inhumane drama of death and destruction did not spare even the temples and their priests. So enormous and massive was this massacre that the weight of the Janeoo (a sacred thread worn round the neck) of those who laid their lives came to 73-1/2 maunds. In great desperation, they took a vow that neither they nor their descendants would ever again enter a house to live in till the fort of Chittor had been liberated. At the same time, they also decided to observe the taboos of not sleeping under a roof or on a cot until their glory was restored. According to tradition, when they were faced with the problem of their livelihood, Lord Shiva helped them. He provided them three iron tools including anvil, tongs and hammer and asked them to repair his chariot. Thus they took to the profession of wandering blacksmiths. In due course of time, many more ex-warriors of Chittor belonging to different clans of Rajputs joined them and they all constituted the community of Gadulya Lohars.

In view of their wandering Character, it is very difficult to get the correct data af the population of Gadulya Lohars. However, according to the census report of 1961, their population in Rajasthen comes to about ten thousand.

In the past these people had a sound reputation for their fine craftsmanship and found sufficient work to enable them to earn if not a large, at any rate a sufficient income for their simple needs. Their main work was the making and repairing of agricultural implements and the forging of the the metal-work of carts and tools for village carpenters or weavers. But the Gadulya Lohars have now fallen upon evil days. Cheap machine-made tools and spare parts for agricultural implements are available in almost every village-shop and handicrafts in general are rapidly being ousted by factory-made goods. Their economic condition now is often pitiable.

As regards their social status, they are treated more or less like untouchables. The hoard of myths and tradition combined with their illiteracy and social disabilities have all gone to make their position static and their mode of living continues to be the same as it might have been two hundred years ago.

Illiterate as they are, they are blind believers on the plane of religion. The gods and goddesses they venerate belong to the Hindu pantheon. The Goddesses Durga and Sheetla Mata are invoked to protect them against evil spirits which they believe, dwell in certain trees and bushes. Animal sacrifices are also performed to please the deities; and festivals like Diwali, Holi and Dashera are celebrated with great rejoicings. The marriage of a Gadulya Lohar generally takes place at an early age and betrothals take place even earlier, sometime when the betrothed is not even born. Divorce and widow re-marriage are allowed, but bigamy for a woman is held to be a serious offence. The moral standard of these people is higher than that of the so-called civilised members of society. It is taken to be disgraceful for a Gadulya Lohar to charge interest on loan advanced to another member of the community. The breach of social customs and community laws is punishable by Panchayats functioning as social tribunals for different communes.

Under the existing circumstances, the only remedy to the miseries of Gadulya Lohars is their permanent settlement. Social workers engaged in tribal welfare and the leaders of Rajasthan are now of the view that with the attainment of independence, the time has come for the Gadulya Lohars to abandon their nomadic life and settle down in one place.

## Rebaris

The Rebaris are semi-nomads known for their specialisation in the art of camel-rearing. Abul Fazl in his Aine Akabari has referred to them as 'a class of Hindus who are acquainted with the habits of the camel' and has observed that they train the country bred camel to pass over far distances in a short time.[11]

These people claim their descent from Rajputs. They say that their forefathers instead of marrying Rajput women had conjugal relations with Apsara or celestial damsels meaning there by perhaps Charan women who styled themselves as deva putris or the daughters of the gods. The origin of the word Rebari is illiterate as they are, they are blind believers on the plane of religion. The gods and goddesses they venerate belong to the Hindu pantheon. The Goddesses Durga and Sheetla Mata are invoked to protect them against evil spirits which they believe, dwell in certain trees and bushes. Animal sacrifices are also performed to please the deities; and festivals like Diwali, Holi and Dashera are celebrated with great rejoicings. The marriage of a Gadulya Lohar generally takes place at an early age and betrothals take place even earlier, sometime when the betrothed is not even born. Divorce and widow re-marriage are allowed, but bigamy for a woman is held to be a serious offence. The moral standard of these people is higher than that of the so-called civilised members of society. It is taken to be disgraceful for a Gadulya Lohar to charge interest on loan advanced to another member of the community. The breach of social customs and community laws is punishable by Panchayats functioning as social tribunals for different communes.

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## Banjaras

These wandering people are also called Vanjaris, Lawanis and Lambhadis. The name Lawani or Lambhadi seems to have been derived from Sanskrit word lavan or salt, which used to be transported by these people for trade. Banjara is derived from Prakrit Vanijaaras meaning a trader. Grierson describes them as a well known tribe of carriers who are found in Western and Southern India. They claim to be of Rajput origin. Ibbetson writes of the Banjaras as follows:—

> "They were the great travelling traders and carriers of Central India, the Deccan and Rajputana and under the Afghan Mughal emperors were the commissariat of the imperial forces. According to Sir H. Elloit, they seem to be a very composite class, including sections of various origin. But the original Banjara caste is said to have its habitat in the sub montane tract from Gorakhpur to Hardwar. The Banjaras of Uttar Pradesh come annually into the Jumno district and estern states in cold weather and buy up large numbers of cattle which they take back again for sale as the summer approaches. These men and the Banjara carriers from Rajputana are principally Hindus."[13]

"Originally cattle breeders, and still experts at this job they proudly claim to be the direct descendants of the brothers Mota and Mola who were believed to have been the cowherds of Lord Krishna. The Banjaras came to the Deccan from Marwar in Rajasthan about 1630, and are now to be met with in all parts of the country. They also traded in grain and salt which they transported from place to place, traversing great distances with their pack bullocks. After the advent of railways they had perforce to lead a more settled life. Owing to unsettled political conditions and other causes, the Banjaras found that they were looked down upon with suspicion, and were for many years unable to give up their traditional nomadic ways. They were declared a criminal tribe in 1896, with their degradation in the economic, social and educational spheres. However, with the repeal of the Criminal Tibes Act in 1952, the Banjaras have become honourable citizens of India on a footing of perfect equality with other communites. With the setting up of a separate social service department by the Government and with the help recieved from non official social service organisations the Banjaras are marching along the high road of progress. The have taken full advantage of the opportunities made available to them for educating themselves and their children and adopting improved methods of farming and animal husbandry."[14]

## Sansis

The Sansis are also nomadic people, notoriously known for their criminal habits.

These tribal people are averse to permanent settlement. They live in improvised shanties on the outskirts of towns and villages, which provide them with convenient bases of operation.

Like Gadulya Lohars they also claim military association with Rana Pratap, of Mewar, who fought against the great Mughal emperor Akbar in the battle of Haldighati. They are said to have taken to anti-social activities after the defeat and death of the Rana when they were chased into the jungles by enemy soldiers.

In appearance, they are of dark complexion, sturdy build and aboriginal features.

Their men wear dhoti and a short robe. The women dress themselves in shirts, skirts and long scarfs known as odhanis. The women are fond of ornaments but wear them only on festive occassions.

They are illiterate and backward, but practices such as the purdah system and child marriage which are prevalent among some of their neighbouring communities have not found acceptance among them.

The social customs of the Sansis are interesting. As regards marriage, the proposals for a girl's hand must essentially come from the suitor or his relatives. If the girl's father initiates the talks, it is presumed that there is something wrong with his daughter. On final settlement, the boy's father pays a marriage fee of Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 to the father of the bride.

During the celebration of the marriage, alcoholic drinks flow like water. All guests, both men and women, drink and dance till midnight and sex taboos are forgotten.

After the ceremony the couple retire to their own room and the next morning, the groom has to declare publicly that the bride was found to be an absolute virgin.

If found otherwise, the bride has to disclose the name of her seducer, who is at once summoned before the elders and asked to acknowledge his guilt and pay the penalty decided by them. If he does not agree to do so, he is socially boycotted.

Poligamy is generally resorted to only when the first wife is incapable of bearing children or otherwise handicapped.

Widow re-marriage is permissible and divorce is also allowed, but both are rare. The Sansi's married life is comparatively happy, wedlock being not a trap but a contract of comradeship and conjugal happiness.

The birth of a son is announced by the beating af a 'thali' a disc of brass or bronz. The occasion is one of great rejoicing. The mother worships the Sun God as the new-born is swung in a cloth cradle and all members of the family sing and dance.

Drinking and meat eating are common, Vanison, pork and rabbit meat are special delicacies for the occasion.

The dead are cremated as among other Hindus. On the next day, all men, women and children of the family go to :the cremation ground, and partake of a specially prepared food known as 'choorma-bati'

On the ninth day all the male relatives get themselves shaven and on the 12th day a death feast is arranged, in which all the friends and relatives of the deceased join.

Unusual rituals are performed when the Sansis set out on a mission of theft or burglary. A goat or a pig is sacrificed to propitiate goddess Kali. Gur and ghee are articles given priority in all thefts and burglaries.

During the British rule, the provisions of the Criminal Tribes of India Act imposed such rigid restrictions on them that they had to report all their movements at the police stations of the area they were in.

Now, as citizens of an independent nation, they enjoy ail the Fundamental Rights and have been classified as a Scheduled Tribe, which provides them with all the facilities and privileges enjoyed by others in the country.

Their illiteracy and criminal background are hurdles to employment opportunities for them. However, with the wind of change and better social surroundings, already many of them have given up their criminal habits and are working as labourers, masons, porters and vegetable sellers.[15]

## Bardic Communities

Rajasthan has two distinguished communities of bards, namely the Bhats and charans.

The Bhats are the bards, heralds and genealogists. In the medieval era, a large number of them were employed as court poets who not only received rewards for their eulogistic writings but also won laurels for their literary feats. A large portion of Pingal poetry written in Brijbhasa in Rajasthan is the contribution of Bhats. The Bhats developed as hearalds and their office more or less tended to become heriditary, The pedigree of those he served was transmitted in all its ramifications from father to son with that marvellous accuracy of memory which has been a marked characteristic of Brahamanic intellect.[16]

The Charans and the Rajputs in historical times were inseparable like body and soul. In the social fabric of Rajasthan, the Charans occupy an intermediate position between the Brahmans and the Rajputs. In character a Charan combines the characteristics of the Rajput with those of the Brahman. "The charan is not a beggarly wandering minstrel as the general impression goes. The Charan was the esteemed and faithful companion of the Rajput, sharing his ammal ( opium ) and half of his loaf in adversity and receiving his extravagant bounty in prosperity. He followed his client chief on horseback to the thickest of fight, where the poetic fire of his geet gave a Rajput "the strength of ten" on the field of carnage. The post of honour at the main gate of the princely castle belonged to the premier Charan, who haughtily demanded his neg there from bridegroom's party, and whose privilege it was to open that gate on the foe in times of sally and received the first blow of hostile sword."[17]

## Other Castes and Tribes

The sketchy description given above covers only a few important castes and tribes of Rajasthan. There remains a large number of communities which should have been dealt with in this context but the tyranny of space forbids to do so. Mention may, however, he made of some of them including the Mers, Gujars, Malis, Kolis, Sunars, Lohars, Dhobis, Darogas, Dhadis, Mirasis, Kumhars, Khatis, Darzis, Lakheras, Chhipas, Tambolis, Ghosis, Kalals, Silavats etc.

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17. K. R. Kanungo, studies in Rajput history, p. 32.

## 4

# FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

The fairs and festivals of Rajasthan are characteristically gay and colourful. Besides the festivals of Diwali, Dashera, Holi and Rakshabandhan observed in almost all parts of the country, there is a long range of local festivals including Teej, Gangaur, Basant Panchami etc. All these festivals are celebrated in a spirit of great eclat and enthusiasm.

### Diwali.

Diwali celebrations in Rajasthan commence with Dhan–Teras the thirteenth day of the first half of Kartika when all metal utensils are rubbed clean and the earthen pots are replaced with new ones. Ornaments and jewellery are also washed and polished on this occasion. But the most distinctive feature of these celbrations, besides, washing and cleaning is the Mehandi–Mandana, an artistic decoration of roofs, surfaces and court-yards, designed with 'Hirmich' or the reddish stone by women folk. There is a particular name atributed to each of them, namely, 'satiya' 'Khooni ka chowk', 'paglya' etc.

Following Dhan Teras is the day especially allotted for personal toilet and embelishment known as Roop Chaudas. The Rajasthani ladies on this day take special baths with 'Ubtan' or the 'peethi' prepared with almond power, til oil, Haldi and barley flour which lend a fascinating grace to their complexion. They also [beautify their palms by different kinds of decorative designs painted with liquid mehandi. 'Ghewar' 'Bengan ke Beej', 'Lahariya' and 'Kapda' are some of the names given to them according to their particular characteristics. There is a common belief in Rajasthani women-folk that shining of these 'mandanas' indicates the enormous love of their husbands for them.

Dressed in colourful costumes and taking in hands the Thal of Pooja these ladies collectively come out of their homes singing melodious folk songs and go into some garden for the worship of the Goddess of youth and beauty. The dogs being believed to be the incarnation of Dharma Raj are also entertained this day. Besides feeding them lavishly, the deepaks made of watered flour and filled with Ghee are also lighted on the crossings in their honour. This is why, this day is known as 'Kukkur-Diwali' in Rajasthan,

Next to Roop Chaudas is Amavashya the main day of these celebrations for which all these preparations were going on for the last so many days. In the morning after taking bath and dressing themselves in new clothes people go to salute and congratulate their friends and relatives. Though it is simply a matter of social courtesy, yet contributes a great deal in sinking of the mutual malices and indifferences which arise during the year. In the evening the ladies dressed in dazzling 'Lengha' and 'Odhani' spreading the fragrance of flowers kept in a plate of pooja full of 'Deeps' present a picturesque scene, while moving from one temple to another temple. In the night, Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, is worshipped. The following folk-tale is narrated in almost every village of Rajasthan on this occasion.

### Queens' Necklace

Once upon a time, there was a young Brahmin always stricken of hunger and poverty. His wife had advised him not to come empty handed while returning home. He strictly struck to this advice. But once it so happened that he could find nothing suitable to be brought home. All of a sudden he had a chance to glance at a membraneous lining left aside by a cow after giving birth to a calf. The Brahmin without any consideration picked it up to carry home. His wife though got very much annoyed yet kept it on the roof of her residential cottage.

Incidentally it so occurred, that the queen of that kingdom while taking bath put off her necklace and kept it aside. She forgot to wear it again and it was taken away by a kite. Immediately the king instructed the Prime Minister or the 'Vazeer' to make an announcement that whosever brought back the necklace would be highly rewarded.

Fortunately, the kite which took away the necklace, came across the membrane which it could relish very much. So it dropped the necklace there and flew away with the membrane.

The Brahmin's wife when heard this proclamation told her husband to return it to the king without accepting any reward except that next year on the Deepawali festival no one in the kingdom other than him (Brahmin) would be allowed to make illuminations at his residence. He returned the necklace to the king who also granted his request. On Diwali night only the Brahmin's home was blazing with lights. The Goddess Lakshmi after roaming through the whole kingdom and finding all houses shrouded in darkness knocked at the Brahmin's door and asked to be admitted in. But the Brahmin would only open the door if she had made promise to remain in his home for complete seven generations. The Lakshmi expressed her desire to remain in his home for only one generation. But the Brahmin did not agree to it. She went in search of some other houses, but in vain. She came again and asked the Brahmin to allow her to get in. But his reply was the same. At last, Lakshmi promised to remain in his home for six generations which was the maximum period prescribed by her. As soon as the doors were opened, his house was full of enormous riches. Some other folk-tales dwelling on the importance of Lakshmi worship are also prevalent in Rajasthan. Illumination on this day are visible in every nook and corner of this State from the humble cottage of a poor to the sky scrapers of the princes.

Annakoot otherwise known as 'Goverdhan' falls next to Diwali. This festival is observed with great preparations at Nathdwara, the most sacred of the shrines of the Vaishnavas, situated a few miles away from Udaipur. The devotees offer hundres of maunds of 'Pakvans' to the deity, which takes many a week to prepare. These Pakvans are removed before the doors are opened to the waiting devotees outside, but a heap of baked rice is left to be looted by the Bhils and others. The Bhils send gift of this 'Mahaprasad' to their relatives and friends and utilize it as medicine during illness.

The cows and bullocks are treated wlth unusual kindness on this day. Their horns are painted with different colours and garlanded, 'Choorma Bati and Dal' a special food uniformly prepared throught out the State is offered fo them.[1]

## Bhai Dooj

Diwali celebrations in Rajasthan conclude with Bhai Dooj the day of sisters' wishes. Every sister marks a 'Teeka' on the forehead of her brother and offers him sweets expressing her good wishes for him. At some places people worship the inkpot and pen on this day. Specially the Kayasthas of Jaipur perform this ceremony.

## Rakhi

Celebrated on the Purnima of Shravan, Rakhi or Rakshabandhan is also the festival of brothers and sisters

Sisters tie threads or Rakhi round the wrists of their brothers expressing all the affection and good wishess. They offer them sweetmeats and coconuts and receive gifts from their brothers. A folk tale reflecting the significance of Rakhi is reproduced below[2] —

Once upon a time there was a girl who had no brother. She was poor.

One Rakhi day when sisters were tieing the rakhi threads. round the wrists of their brothers and offering them sweets to eat. She felt very lonely.

The brothers were also quite generous and giving gifts of money, clothes and ornaments as they could afford on the occasion.

The girl had no brother who could accept her rakhi. She was sad and weeping. Her mother tried to pacify her, but she would not listen.

Ultimately she wiped her tears and taking a rakhi in her hand, said, "Ma I'm going to offer this rakhi to my Ganeshya bhai."

She walked out of the house and went straight to the temple of Ganpati, situated at the outskirts of the village.

The girl put her rakhi before Ganpati and requested him to accept her offer. She sat down before him with folded hands.

However, there was no indication from the god-brother's side about his acceptance. The girl waited and waited, till night fell and it was dark all around. She had been sitting and waiting, lest her avowed god brother should accept her offer.

Minutes and hours ticked by and the girl was dauntless, oblivious of the growing night. Her thoughts were centred round her brother Ganeshya who, she belived would surely accept her rakhi.

The resolutness of the girl made Ganeshya uneasy. He could no longer keep sitting on his throne unconcerned and indifferent.

At last, he left his throne and came out of the temple. He stood before the girl and petted her on her shoulder for she had by that time dozed off.

The girl awoke. Seeing her chosen brother, she hurriedly scrambled up to her feet and bowed humbly before him.

Taking her small hand carressingly in his own the god-brother said; "Come. Let's go home. It's grown very late."

The girl obeyed and the two walked off.

Along the way, Ganesh's thread was imprinted with golden root-prints. Thus walking slowly and proudly with her brother, the girl arrived at her house. Halting before the closed door, she cried out aloud, "Look Ma, open the door, my brother Ganeshya has come home with me."

The simple mother could not believe her daughter. She hurried to the door and on opening it she stood aghast.

Lo; indeed Ganeshya was standing at the door holding his sister's tender hand in his own with the little one clinging happily to it.

The mother received the two, still dazed and speechless. On being reminded by her daughter, she offered what best she had in the house to her godly son still not believing her own eyes.

Satisfied, Ganpati left, and the next morning, when the two mother and daughter woke, they found themselves lying on golden cots with thick cushions. attended by abigails inside a palatial building.

The sister had received the rakhi-present from her brother Ganeshya.

And when the villagers went to the temple that day, they were amazed to find a rakhi thread on the wrist of the idol of Ganpati.

### Dashera

This festival of universal observance in India is celebrated in Rajasthan with its local peculiarities. It is in fact a festival predominantly martial in character and is virtually confined to Rajput community. Besides burning the effigy of Ravan, a ritual symbolic of the victory of virtue over vice, the Rajputs worship their arms on this day. In Kota and Bharatpur the festival inspires great hilarity which becomes manifest in the huge processions consisting of people in colourful costumes, caprisoned elephants, groomed horses and smart turn-out of troops.

## Holi

Holi celebrated in the month of Phalgun is essentialy a festival of fun, frolic and humour. Men, women and children all set in a hilarious mood throw colour at each other.

## Gangaur[3]

In quick succession to Holi, the most colourful festival of Rajasthan is Gangaur. The first half of this word 'Gan' symbolises lord Shanker while the second half 'Gaur' is a synonym of Parvati, his consort.

According to Indian mystical thought, all conjugal love and happiness flows from Shanker and Parvati and this explains for the observance of the festival by all married and unmarried women ranging right from the royal palaces of the princes to the huts of the poor.

The festival which begins on the first day of Chaitra, the first month of the Indian Vikram Calender continues up to the fourth day of the bright half of the month.

The virgins worship the Goddess for being blessed with husband of their choice while the married ladies for the long and prosperous life of their husbands. Widows are denied the right to participate in the rituals of the festival. It is religously enjoined upon a newly married girl to observe the full course of 18 days of the festival falling first after her marriage. She invites some of her intimate newly-married girl friends by sending each of them a twig of acacia locally knows as 'Datun' acceptance of which indicates that they would give her company during the entire period of worship of the Goddess.

The rituals relating to the festival commence from the next day of the 'Holi'.

Every morning groups of unmarried girls go to some garden or orchard for bringing blades of green grass, flowers and water in six to seven pots putting over head in pyramidical shape. While returning they sing melodious songs on the way and offer to the Goddess.

The wall of the room where the 'Puja' is performed is white-washed and women paint on them the figure of Isar and Gauri. Isar and Gauri are represented sitting face to face playing chaupar, a favourite game of the royal ladies. Gauri is painted with her maids in attendence. They are displayed in regal robes suitable to the occasion. The wooden and clay images are placed on the floor facing these wall paintings.

Enchanting music of folk songs accompanied by dance fills the atmosphere with liveliness when the rituals of worship are in process at about 9 to 10 a. m. in the morning.

The worship invariably concludes with the narrating of folk tales which are listened with rapt attention by the devotees. One such story goes like this. There lived a prince and a gardener. Both were great friends. The former sowed barley and gram in his fields while the latter grew green grass on his own. The prince had a bumper crop while the gardener's meadows knew no growth. Explaining the reason, the prince told him that some maidens cut away the turf from his fields every day. So the next day, the gardener came to his meadow much before the dawn and hid himself under his cart. When the girls came to the meadow and began to gather green blades of the grass, the gardener appearedon t he scene and snatched away their ornaments as a punishment for their misdeed. The girls told him that they wanted the green grass for the worship of the goddess for not more than sixteen days; and requested him to return their ornaments promising to bring for him a present of the offerings of sweet dishes on Gangaur. The gardener granted their request. On 16th day of the worship of Gangaur the girls reached his house with plenty of sweets offered by them to Gauri but he had gone out and his old mother who was present there asked the girls to keep what they had brought in the kitchen of her hut. The girls went away and the old lady sat down on her cot in the courtyard. Late in the night when the Gardener came back to his house and entered the kitchen for meals he almost went mad with joy to find there the heaps of gold and diamonds, pearls and other gems. The story ends with the narrator's wish that everyone of them including the teller of the story, may be blessed by the goddess, Gauri, with good fortune similar to that which befell the Gardener.

These morning rituals continue for full fifteen days with growing intensity and the climax is reached during the last three days. 'Teej' the main day of the festival is a day of embelishent and beautification for married women who in their glamourous garments gather together to make final offerings to the Goddess. The idols of Gauri and Isar are generally made of clay painted afresh every year.

The images of Isar and Gauri which are crafty creations of the local artisans are decorated with various ornaments. The rituals performed during these last three days are almost identical to those of a traditional marrige.

Biding farewell to Gauri on the last day is a scene full of pathos. It is in fact a scene of a daughtet's farewell after the wedding is over. Two women stand erect with the images of Isar and Gauri on their heads. A rupee is presented to Isar as a parting gift usually given to a son-in-law according to Hindu traditions. Gauri then accompanies Isar and the women folk with tears in eyes consign them to waters in some tank or well. With a heavy heart they return homewards wiping tears with the ends of their scarves.

In important towns of Rajashan big fairs are held on this occasion. Most popular of them is the fair held at Jaipur in which thousands of men and women from rural areas dressed in colourful costumes congregate to watch the procession of Gangaur taken out with all the paraphernalia of elephants, horses and chariots symbolising the pomp and pageantry of the golden era of the great Rajput rulers.

Giving an account of similar procession at Udaipur, the city of lakes, Col. James Tod had remarked over a century back:

"A more imposing or more exhilarating sight can not be imagined than the entire population of a city thus assembled for the purpose of rejoicing. The countinance of very individual, from the Prince to the peasant, dressed in smiles. Carry the eye to heaven, and it rests on 'a sky without a cloud'; below is a magnificent laKe, the even surface of the deep blue waters broken only by palaces of marble, whose arched piazzas are seen through the foilage of orange grove plaintain, and tamarind; while the vision is bounded by noble mountains, their peaks towering over each other and composing an immense amphitheatre."

**Teej**

Observed on the third day of the second half of Shravan, it is also a festival of Women-folk celebrated for propetiating lord Shiva and Parvati for ensuring happy marital life. On this ocasion brothers invite their sisters to their parental homes for reunion with the family. All the women of the family are given presents, of multi-coloured saris with zigag patterns, called Lahariya or Indra Dhanush. Special sweets like the disc-shaped ghevar and pheni are prepared in abudnance and are exchanged as tokens of goodwill and friendship in the neighbourhood.

In the rural areas, weeks before the festival begins, swings are tied to the green trees preferably on the banks of some near by tank or pond and the ladies enjoy swinging amidst melodious tunes of folk songs and music. Songs and dances fill the atmospere with liveliness when the rituals of the worship are performed on the main dav.

In important towns of Rajasthan big fairs are held on this occasion. Most popular of them is the fair held at Jaipur in which thousands of men and women from rural areas dressed in colourful costumes congregate to watch the procession of Teej taken out in the city.

In the old days the ruler's family sat in the maidan to watch the procession and the display of horsemanship and fencing. Thousads of men and women from the villages, who make it a point to join festivities at the maidan, give it an appearance of a carnival. After offering food and arti the image is taken back to the palace and the mela disperses.[4]

Besides the above festivals, Makar Sankranti, Basant Panchami, Janmashtami, Ganesh Chowth etc, are the other Hindu festivals which are equally celebrated amidst great rejoicings.

## Muharram

Among the Muslim festivals, Muhharam which is observed through out Rajasthan deserves special mention.

In Jaipur, the Pink city of India, the festival of Muharram presents a panorama of Hindu—Muslim brotherhood symbolic of their emotional intergation. Although the roots of this brotherhood are centuries old, however, an atmosphere to celebrate this occasion with great preparations developed only during the regime of mirza Raja Jaisingh who served as Governer in the South while Aurangazeb was on the throne of Delhi.

The tradition of celebrating Muharram and taking out procession of the Tazias had been rich enough in South since the golden era of the Adilshahi Sultans of Bijapur. Jaisingh not only brought this tradition from the South, but he invited hundreds of Muslim painters and musicians to settle down in his capital. This explains for the majestic impact on the procession of Tazias in Jaipur.

During the reign of Mirza Raja and his successors, the people of Jaipur took great interest in the erection of Tazias and their deccration. With the opening of the month of Muharram, people of different mohallas or localities busied themselves with the preparation of Tazias. Not only the higher strata of society, even the Kamanigars or the makers of bow and arrow, the pannigars or the workers of Mica and the weavers had their own

Tazias. There was a great competition with regard to structure, design and decoration. Inhabitants of every locality tried their best to win popular praise for their particular Tazia. Some erected their Tazia only with solid pieces of salt while others gave unique look to theirs with the help of mica. One significant aspect of these Tazias was that their structure and lay-out was greatly influenced by the architecture of the tombs of the South.

On the tenth day of Muharram when the procession of Tazias was taken out, even the Hindu families prepared sweets and tasty foods end children wore new clothes to participate in the procession.

During the reign of Maharaja Ram Singh who was a great patron of arts and letters, the State started having its own Tazias twelve in number representing the twelve platoons of those times. They were taken out with a great paraphernalia consisting of soldiers, elephants and horses. Late on, a royal Tazia of Gold and silver was also got prepared which is taken out even today. It is said that Ram Singh himself went barefooted with the Tazias up to Karbala on the Amber Road.

### Dancing girls in Procession

After Maharaja Ram Singh, his successor Madho Singh also continued to take even greater interest in the procession of Tazias. His Prime Minister, Nawab Fayyaz Ali khan was known for his love for splendour and glamour. His beloved, Gauharjan, the noted classical singer, though a dancing girl by profession commanded immense influence in the royal circles. She had her own Tazia and went out in the procession, accompanied by hundreds of dancing girls dressed in green garments and singing mourning songs. During all the ten days of Muharram, they abstained from dance and music.

In fact, the people of Jaipur irrespective of caste and creed retain the same unflinching faith and respect for the festival of Muharram. The Hindus instal temporary huts for providing cold water and sharbat to the participants of the procession and take their children under the shadow of the Tazia to seek the blessing of Hazarat Imam Hussain.

This picture of mutual love and respect amongst the Hindus and Muslims on thc occasion of Muharram is visible throughout the geographical limits of the former Jaipur State and confirm the feeling that whatever be the political games the common masses can not break their ages old emotional ties.[5]

## Fairs

Fairs as a media of mass recreation are very popular in Rajasthan. All the year round there is a regular cycle of fairs held in various parts of the state.

The most important fair of Rajasthan is held at Pushkar. With the approach of the Annual Kartik Fair between Devothan Akadashi and Purnima, the full moon day, this town of the sacred lake surrounded by Ghats and temples becomes a centre of brisk activity. A new township of tents, huts and camps springs up to provide accomodation to thousands of people who throng here from various parts af the country.

There are five principal temples at Pushker, those dedicated to Brahma, Savitri, Badri Narayan, Varah and Shiva Atmateswar. They are all of comparatively modern constructions, for the old temples suffered much at the hands of the Mughals particularly Aurangzeb. A masjid which is still kept up was built by Aurangzeb on the side of a temple to Keshav Rai. The temple of Brahma was built by Gokul Parakh, an oswal Mahajan of Gwalior, and is said to be the only temple dedicated to Brahma in India. The attendants of the temple are puri Gosains. The temple of Savitri is built on the north of the lake, and was constructed by the Purohit of Ajit Singh of Marwar The temple of Badri Narayana was rebuilt by the Thakur of Kharwa some 100 years ago. That of Varah or the boar, was demolished by Jahangir, and the present temple was built by Bakhat Singh of Jodhpur. Goma Rao, a Maratha Governor, rebuilt the temple of Shiva Atmateswar.

Among the modern temples, the temple of Rama Vaikunthanath of Shri Ramanuja Sampradaya, at the entrance of the town of Pushkar, is the most imposing. The temple was built in 1925 A. D. by Seth Magniram Bangar of Marwar at a cost of eight lakh of rupees. The Vimana and the Gopuram over the temple were built in accordance with the rules of the Hindu architecture.

The temple of Savitri attracts married Hindu women, especially from Bengal who worship at Her alter and ask for eternal company with their husbands. This as well as the temple of Brahma are peculiar to Pushker for no where else in the country they have found shrines raised to them.

Special sanction attaches to a dip in the waters of Pushkar during the last 5 days of Kartik. The orthodox believe that no pilgrimage to the Chardham, the four holi places on the four corners of India is complete, untill the pilgrim has taken a dip at the King of the holy places Pushkar.

In the agricultural and pastoral economy of Rajasthan, the Pushkar fair has attained importance for the sale and purchase of cattle, agricultural implements and other articles. A big cattle-Fair, therefore, synchronises with the Bathing Festival. It is interesting to note here that even in the records of Emperor Jahangir's time, we come across references to a cattle fair at Pushkar being one of the biggest cattle fair in .the north western India. Till today this huge cattle fair is being continued under the patronage of the Government. Being the biggest cattle fair it draws peasants from all over the state with their camel and cattle.

The Pushkar fair presents a panaroma of memorable visual images; crowds of Rajasthani men and women in colourful clothes and gaily decorated animals against an expanse of tawny sand dunes and the azure blue holy lake.

## Tejaji Fair

Tejaji Cattle Fair is held in Parbatsar town of tehsil Parabatsar in district Nagaur. It is celebrated from Bhadon Badi

Dashmi to Bhadon Sudi Ekadashi (August-September) every year. The fair is held in honour of the celebrated hero Tejaji, who according to a legend was a saint of karnal near Nagaur and lived about 950 years ago. He had been married at Rupnagar in Kishangarh. While grazing his cattle, he observed that a cow belonging to a Brahman was in the habit of going daily to a certian place in the jungle where milk used to drop from her udder and fell into a hole inhabited by a snake. Teja agreed with the snake to supply him milk daily, and thus prevent the Brahman suffering loss. Once when he was preparing to visit his father-in-law, he forgot the pact, and the snake appearing declared that it was necessary he should bite Teja. Teja stipulated for permission to first visit his father-in-law, to which the snake agreed. Teja proceeded on his journey and at Kishangarh rescued the village cattle from a band of robbers but was desperately wounded in the encounter. Mindful of his promise to return, Teja with difficulty reached home and presented himself to the snake, who however, could find no spot to bite, so dreadfully had Teja been cut up by the robbers. Teja, therefore, put out his tongue which the snake bit and so he died. The Jats believe that if they are bitten by a snake and tie a thread round the right foot while repeating the name of Tejaji the poison will prove innocuous. There is a temple of Tejaji at Sarasara in Kishangarh, and a fair is held in July. Tejaji is always represented as a man on horseback with a drawn sword, while a snake is biting his tongue. Nearly all Jats wear an amulet of silver with this design round their necks.[6]

The main fair which is now held at Parbatsar was once held in Sarasara. It was about three centuries ago that the venue was changed to Parbhatsar. It is said that during the time of Maharaja Vijai Singh there was a prominent Hakim at Parbatsar, named Bhandari Vijai Singh, who found that Marwaris, especially the Jats in great number went to Sarasara village and the Maharaja of Kishangarh made good income out of this. He knew that the main object with which the Jats went to Sarasara was to offer worship to Tejaji. He gave out that Tejaji appeared before him in dream and desired that his devotees thenceforth should worship him at Parbatsar. The Hakim got a figure of Tejaji made and ordered all Jats to gather at Parbatsar for the fair and not to go to Sarasara any more. Some persons are of the opinion that there was no proper arrangement of water at Sarasara, and the people on that account decided to change the venue of the fair to Parbatsar.

People can easily spare time to participate in the fair as they are free from agricultural activities. They get an opportunity to meet their friends and relatives, and to purchase and sell their cattle at good prices.

## Jambheswar Fair

Jambheswar fair is held in village Mukam of Tehsil Nokha in Bikaner district, twice a year on Phalgun Budi Amavasya and Ashvin Budi Amavasya, in commemoration of Jambheswarji, the illustrious founder of the Bishnoi sect. The fair was initiated by his disciplies on Phalgun Budi Amavasya, Vikram Samwat 1648 ( 1591 A. D. ). This is attended by many thousand persons, who come from all parts of the country to pay their homage to the saint. The fair which is held on Ashiyin Budi Amavasya is a smaller one.

The first settler of the village is said to have been one Mala Ram Jat who established himself there in Vikram Samwat 1535 (1478 A.D.). Seven years later he came under the influence of Jambheswarji and became one of his ardent followers. Presently there are 200 families in Mukam and other villages who trace their descent from him. The Bishnois probably form a separate religious sect among the agricultural population, so much so that they can be said to have developed into a separate caste which holds no social intercourse with other Hindu castes.

Their deity is Vishnu, who is worshipped in his incarnation as Jambhaji. Jambha built a large tank in Phalodi and near it he founded a village which is called after him self 'Jambha'. On the bank of the tank, he dug a grave with his own hands and asked his disciples to bury him there when he died.

Jambhaji died on the ninth day of the dark half of Margshirsha in Samwat 1593 (1537 A. D.) on the top of a sand dune to which he had gone after leaving Peepasar village. His disciples, who were with him when he died, would not allow his body to be taken to the grave he had dug for himself near the tank but said that they would bury him where he had died and this they did. His grave and a temple are still to be seen near village Talwa.

## Kailadevi Fair

Kailadevi fair is one of the principal religious fairs of Rajasthan held from Chaitra Krishna 12 to Chaitra Shukla 12. The fair is held at Kaila about 24 kilometres to the south west of Karauli, which is a sub-divisional head-quarter of district Sawai Madhopur. Kaila is identical with goddess Bhawani, whose idol is said to have been installed in Vikram Samwat 1171 (1114 A.D.) in a temple standing atop a rock in picturesque surroundings.

The site is linked by road with Karauli, Hindaun and Mahavirji, and is approachable in all seasons. There is regular traffic all the year round on this road, which is maintained in good condition. Hindaun, the nearest Railway Station is at a distance of about 48 km. There is a regular bus service from Hindaun to Karauli and from Karauli to Kaila. This place is connected with Gangapur also by a road running via Shri Mahavirji which is another Railway Station on the broad gauge line of the Western Railway near Kaila.

During the fair, which attracts nearabout two lakh pilgrims, special arrengements are made by State Transport for the safe conduct of passengers to and from the site of the fair. About four hundred buses are used under special permits and special supervisory staff is posted to control their movement. In addition to the government vehicles, buses from and to Agra, Gwalior, Bharatpur and Gangapur run every hour. People from near by villages come on camels and horses and in bullock carts.

## Karani Mata Fair

At Deshnok in Bikaner district stands the shrine of Shri Karani which is better known as the 'Temple of Rats'. In commomeration of shri Karani, a fair is held here twice a year. The first fair is held during Navaratra in chaitra while the seconed one is held in the month of Ashvin.

Shri Karani, a dark complexioned and black faced lady was a living legend of her time. From millions of masses to the mighty monarchs bowed before her in reverence.

Acknowleged as the incarnation of Goddess "Avad" of the Shakta cult, Shri Karani was born in 1387 A. D. at village Suvap in the sandy region of Marwar. Belonging to the Charan Caste, her father Mehaji and mother Deval Bai had already six daughters prior to the birth of Shri Karani. The parents now naturally. longed for a son, but much against their wishes the next issue was, however. a girl. This put the whole family in a gloomy mood and the sister of Mehaji exclaimed with indignation, "Again the same stone has fallen". She had hardly uttered these words that a finger of her right hand at once got twisted and remained deformed for good.

A few years later when the same lady was combing the hair of this unwanted girl, she questioned "Auntee ! is it your twisted finger that goads my head ?" The old lady recalled the mishap and narrated the whole story. The little girl with her miraculous touch put the finger again in perfect order. This episode got currency and people took it for granted that the girl was gifted with supernatural powers.

Coming of as much as twenty nine years of age Shri Karani was persuaded by her parents to marry Bareth Deepaji. The marriage took place but she abstained totally from the pleasures of conjugal life and compelled her husband to marry her younger sister. The husband had no option but to accept the proposal.

### Miracles made her a goddess

Shri Karani had been given hundreds of cows in her dowery for whom proper arrangement of fodder and water was not possible in the desert village of her father-in-law. Her entire family, therefore, shifted to a jungle falling under the region of Rao Kanha, the then ruler of Jangloo. He, out of some enmity towards the family of Shri Karani, began to trouble them and Karani, it is said, with her supernatural powers one evening transformed her self into a lion, a rare animal in this sandy area, and killed him.

Shri Karani is also said to have advised Rao Bika, the founder of Bikaner to marry princess Rang Kumari, the daughter of Rao Shekha Bhati of Poogal to put an end to the enmity between the Bhatis and the Rathors. Legend has it that at the time of Rang Kumari's marriage with Bika, her father Shekhaji was in prison at Multan. In his absence the performance of 'Kanya-dan' ceremony became a problem. But Shri Karani came to the rescue. This time she transformed herself into a kite and flying to Multan, came back with Shekhji having lifted him from the jail. In grateful memory to this event, the kite remained in the state emblems of the two erst while Rathore states of Bikaner and Jodhpur and the bird is worshipped even now by the people as a Goddess. Following Shri Karani's mandate, Rao Bika got a number of development works executed for ameliorating the conditions of the common people. The foundation stone of the fort of Bikaner is also said to have been laid by Shri Karani. For the past five centuries, she has been the titular deity of the rulers of Bikaner, invoked and worshipped at all festivals. The former Maharaja of Bikaner Shri Karni Singhji is also named after Shri Karani. Rao Jodha, founder of Jodhpur and Rao Rinamal of Mandore were amongst the great devotees of this living goddess.

Shri Karani attained salvation from her earthly life in the year 1538 at the age of hundred and fifty years.

## Tale of the Temple

Many tales are related as to the installation of the image of Shri Karani and the construction of the Temple. One of them s, that a few years before her death, during her trip to Jaisalmer, Shri Karani had asked a blind artisan to make her statue. The artisan, it is said, got an eternal sight and carved the statue by his sheer imagination which is now enshrined at Deshnok. First of all this idol is said to hava been installed during Karani's life time in the year 1535 A. D. in a small room which gradually took the shape of this grand temple.

The image of Shri Karani, bearing a longish mouth, a crown on the head, Kundals in the ears, Trishool in the left hand piercing in the head of Mahishasur and skull in the right hand is a noble piece of sculpture carved in the yellow Jaisalmer stone the colour of which is not visible due to the paint of vermilion or Sindoor. It is two feet high and has put on a two-fold chain of Precious jewels round her neck. On both of her sides are seated seven other small statues including those of Goddess "Avad" and Shri Karanis' sisters. Behind the temple are four big well which supply drinking water to the population of this place as well as a large number of pilgrims visiting the shrine every year.

**Temple of rats**

One striking feature of the temple is the huge mass of rats jumping before the altar of the shrine. They are called 'Baba' by the pilgrims. If a rat gets on the head of a pilgrim, it is deemed that the Goddess is particularly pleased with him. If a white rat is visible to some person, it is believed that the Goddess herself has given 'darshan' to him just as at the shrine of Amarnath in Kashmir, a glimpse of a pair of white peageon is believed to have seen Lord Shanker with her betterhalf, Parvati.

The rats are regularly served with milk and sweet balls and evey care is taken for their safety and security. If a rat is incidentally killed by the carelessness of a visitor he has to offer at the altar of the Goddess, a rat made of either gold or silver according to one's capacity.

Shri Karani, besides being the presiding deity of Rajputs and charans commands faith from all section of people. A number of old Rajasthani poets have paid their homage in verse to this Goddess whose life story combines in it-self all the three elements of folk-lore. history and myth.

## Rani Sati Fair

Rani Sati fair is also held twice a year in Jhunjhunu town on Margshirsh Krishan Navmi and Bhadrapada Amavasya. It was on the Margshirsh Krishna Navmi that Rani Sati—the first in the series of the thirteen satis of the Jalan family immolated herself. The last Sati sacrificed herself on the Bhadrapada Amavasya. It is, therefore, on these two days that the fair is held to commemorate the memories of the satis. As Rani was the first sati in the family the temple and the fair is known by her name.

## Sheetla Mata Fair

In commemoration of Sheetla Mata, a fair is held every year on Chaitra Krishna Ashtmi ( March-April ) in village 'Seel Ki Doongri in Tehsil Chaksu of Jaipur district. There is a shrine of Mataji on the top of a hillock. The fair is attended by many thousand persons, who flock to the shrine from all parts of the State.

Sheetla Mata is considered to be the protectress of children.

Offerings in cash or kind are made to her by the people who go to the shrine for worship. Offerings of a piece of red cloth, gur and gulgulas ( a swee dish ) made at the shrine of Sheetla Mata are believed to bring relief to persons affected by small pox. Basora festival which comes on seventh day of dark half of Chaitra is celebrated with a view to propitiate the Mata. But if this date falls on a Saturday, a Sunday or a Tuesday, the people celebrate Basora on the sixth day of the month. In Punjab, the Basora festival is celebrated on the first Tuesday in the month of Chaitra. On this occasion women prepare gulgulas and such other sweet eatables on the previous night. They are offered at the shrine early in the morning of the festival day amidst singing of devotional songs. The offerings are claimed by the village Kumhar ( potter ).

## Banganga Fair

Banganga fair is held at a small place near a rivulet about 11 km. from the important historical township of Bairath in Jaipur district. People in large numbers assemble there on the full moon day of Vaishakh (April-May) annually to have a dip in the sacred stream which is believed to have been brought into existence by Arjun, the most famous of the Pandavas. Though the day of the fair is intimately connected with Buddhism, being the day on which its founder became the Englightened, it has no connection with that faith as far as Banganga is concerned.

## Gogaji Fair

Gogaji fair is held in village Goga Medi in tehsil Nohar of Ganganagar district. The fair is celebrated in memory of Gogaji, a renowned hero of this area. It is celebrated from the 9th day of the dark half of Bhadrapada ( Goga Navmi ) to the 11th day of dark half of the same month.

There is a difference of opinion among historians about the life and career of Gogaji but the people in general have never taken note of it. He is popular as a God of snakes. He is more revered in Rajasthan that in any other Indian State. There is a Than ( sacred place ) of Gogaji in every village. It is generally located under a tree of Khejra. When any person is bitten by a snake in a village, he is carried to the Than of Gogaji. There big drums and gongs are sounded throughout the night and the patient is kept awake. Some persons dance with iron chains in their hands which they strike on their backs and heads. That they are not hurt or wounded is ascribed to the supernatural powers of Gogaji. It may be that dances and songs are arranged to keep the person bitten by the snake awake, as poison affects the sleeping person more speedily than if he were awake. They keep on chanting mantras to counteract the poison. Replicas of Gogaji's horse are worshipped on Goga Navmi in all house-holds in the region. It is widely believed that if a person is bitten by a poisonous snake, he can be cured only by worshipping Gogaji and not by any medicines.

### Baneshwar Fair

Baneshwar fair is held in village Navatapra of Aspur tehsil in Dungarpur district. The fair is held on a small delta formed by the joining of the river Som with Mahi, one and a half km. from the residential area of the village.

The name Baneshwar is derived from the name of the most revered Shiva Linga of the area. As has already been mentioned, the temples are situated on the delta of the rivers Som and Mahi. A delta is known as Ven in Wagdi language. Thus, the name, Veneshwar meaning the master of the delta, was given to this Shiva Linga, which became Baneshwar with the passage of time. It is said to be a Swayambhu Linga, that is, self-born. It is a small Linga of about 20 cm in height, and its top is broken into five parts. It is said that a cow used to come here daily from the village Lasana and milk used to flow spontaneously from her udders on this Linga. Her master, in his eagerness to find out the person who milked the cow, followed her one day and saw the phenomenon. But when the cow saw her master, she thought of running away from the spot. Before she could do so, one of her hooves struck against the Shiva Linga, and it was broken in five parts. According to Indian tradition, normally broken idols are not worshipped. This Shiva Linga being Swayambhu is, however, still worshipped.

This fair is predominantly a tribal affair. More than half of the congregation is of the Bhils. They revere Baneshwar Mahadeo as well as Mavji, the latter being mostly revered by so called low castes such as the Balais and the Chamaras, and they assemble here in large numbers. Members of other Hindu castes also go there but their number is comparatively small. The participants come mostly in groups of varying sizes consisting of relatives and friends and stay at the available convenient places; no place being conventionally assigned to any person or group. Meetings of the community Panchayats etc. to settle outstanding disputes or issues are not held on this occasion. Followers of religious other than the Hindus are rarely seen among visitors.

They come as traders or visitors only. Majority of the devotees come from the districts of Dungarpur, Udaipur and Banswara and only a small number from other districts. The average number of persons visiting the place at the time of the fair is over 50,000.

### Ramdeora Fair

Ramdeora fair is held every year for ten days from Bhadon Sudi 2 to Bhadon Sudi 11 ( August-September ) when more than a lakh of people from far and near congregate to pay their homage to the well-known 15th century Marwari saint, Shri Ramdeoji.

There is no written record available about the origin of the village; but a legend says that Ramdeora was a place where Shri Ramdeoji established himself. He is said to have been born on Bhadon Sudi 2 in Vikram Samvat 1461, and took samadhi in Samvat 1515 on Bhadon Sudi 11, in the village itself. According to Erskin the year of samadhi corresponds to 1458 A. D. and it can be presumed that the village came into existence about the same time.

Village Ramdeora was granted in jagir to the temple of Ramdeoji during the time of the old Jodhpur State. It was then Phalodi Pargana of Jodhpur Raj. After the formation of the State of Rajasthan in 1949, it was placed under Phalodi tehsil. Later when a separate tehsil of Pokaran was created under Jaisalmer district, the village was transferred to it.

Ramdeoji is also known as Ram Shah Pir; and is worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims. Although there are no Muslim residents in the village, they come from far and near to attend the fair of Ramdeoji.

### Temple of Ramdeoji

The shrine dedicated to Ramdeoji is situated on the bank of Ramsar tank to the south-west of the village. A rubble road connects the shrine to tha railway station.

### History of Ramdeoji

Ramdeoji was a Rajput of Tomar clan. He is hailed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna in Kaliyug era. It is said that

Prithviraj Chohan (1175 to 1192 A.D.) was the son of a daughter of King Anang Pal, the ruler of Delhi, who had no male issue. While going on a pilgrimage he felt the necessity of entrusting the adminisiration of his kingdom to somebody; and on the advice of his nearest relatives, entrusted it to Prithviraj chohan. It is said that when king Anang Pal returned after his pilgrimage, Prithvi Raj refused to restore the kingdom to him. Anang Pal's descendants, therefore, left Delhi and established themselves, in an area, which is now reported to be a part of the present Shiv tehsil in Jaisalmer district. One of Anang Pal's descendants named Ajmal was a devotee of ( Dwarka Dheesh (Master of Dwarka i. e. Lord Krishna ) but he had no issue. According to a legend as he was sitting out one day during the rains, some farmers, who were proceeding to their fields, turned back on seeing him. On questioning, the farmers stated that it was a bad omen to see a person who had no issue. Ajmal was upset with the reply and took to the worship of Dwarka Dheesh. Because of his sincere devotion and penance, Dwarka Dheesh was pleased with him and took birth as his son. In Vikram Samvat 1460 on Basant Panchmi, a son was born to his wife and was named as Viramdeo. After some time when the wife of Ajmal went to the cradle in which Viramdeo was sleeping she found a second child lying with signs of Dwarka Dheesh. This child was named Ramdeo. Ramdeoji became famous as a saint in Marwar and his fame spread far and wide. Five Pirs (Priests) came from Macca to test him. Ramdeoji offered food and milk to them but they refused to take it as they hed forgotton to bring their utensils from Macca. Ramdeoji got their utensils from Mecca by his miraculous powers. The Pirs were impressed by this demonstration of supernatural powers and paid obeisance to him. Since then Ramdeoji began to be addressed as Ram Shah Pir.

Ramdeoji got constructed Ramsar Tank; and an old well called 'Parcha Baori' was repaired by him. It is belived that the water of the cures well many diseases.

Ramdeoji married a girl named Nehalde. He found a little female child in a basket one day who later grew to be his true follower and took samadhi before him. Her name was Dallibai. Her grave can be seen in the shrine of Ramdeoji. Another famous follower of Ramdeoji was Harji Rajput of Bhati clan.

Ramdeoji is worshipped by all Hindu communities, but by the Scheduled Castes whom he specially patronised, he is worshipped more ardently. There are no caste, creed or sex restrictions on the entry into the shrine of Ramdeoji or for bathing in the Parcha Baori and Ramsar Tank. Mostly the Bhambis, the Meghwals, the Chamars and the Banjaras worship him apart from other Muslims and Hindus.

## Teachings

Ramdeoji is considered as the invincible hero who devoted his life to the uplift of the drown trodden. He did not belive in the low and the high of the caste hierarchy and the rich and the poor. He wanted to put an end to this distinction and treat all persons equally. He belived in helping the needy. He possessed mystical powers and influenced the mind of his followers by precept. Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes had full faith in him and worshipped him as a hero. Ramdeoji buried himself alive. This is the reason why his followers burry the dead irrespective of caste though Ramdeoji himself never asked his followers to burry or burn the dead.

## Other Places of Pilgrimage

Besides the places of religious sanctity described above, there are many more important places of pilgrimage frequented by people of various sects.

Bearing testimony to the fact that Rajasthan has been the cradle of Jainism are the world-famous Delwara temples, situated about one and a half mile away from the fascinating hill station of Mt. Abu. Out of the five temples existing at Delwara, the two temples, those of Vimal Shah and Vastoopal and Tejpal are superb master-pieces in the marble.

According to the inscriptions, this temple costing Rs. 28 crores was constructed by Vimal Shah, the Prime Minister of King Bheemdeva of Gujrat in the year 1032 A.D. Legend has it that Ambaji, the patron-deity of Vimal Shah gave 'Darshan' to him in the dream and directed him to construct a temple of Teerthankar Adi Nath at Delwara. But the then Parmar king of Abu was not prepared to give land for construction in his kingdom. After long negotiations it was decided that the cost of land would be defrayed by covering silver sheets on the construction site. It is said that land alone cost 18 Lakhs of rupees to Vimal Shah.

The temple enshrines a huge image of Adi Nath whose eyes are made of real diamond and the necklace around the neck is studeed with invaluable precious stones. Supported on numerous marble pillars, the ceilings are excellent specimens of the sculptoral art.

The temple of Teerthankar Neminath was constructed in the year 1231 by two brothers named Vastoopel and Tejpal who were staunch followers of Jainism. The temple whose pillars are like those of the mosques built by Emperor Iltutmish at Delhi contains numerous scenes of Jain mythology carved in the marbles. The inner apartments of the temple are in resemblance with the dream lands depicted in the fairy tales.

The Delwara temples though universally renowned for their architectural grandeur want that attraction for a classical jain which, Mahaveerji, the sacred shrine of Swami Mahaveer presents to his imagination.

This famous place of pilgrimage is situated at the placid bank of the river Gambheer in Sawai Madhopur District. The temple which dates back to nearly four centuries, enshrines the nude image of the last Teerathankar of jains, Bhagwan Mahaveer, built of red stone. Every year, a fair is held here from the 11th day of the second half of chaitra to the 1st day of the first half of Vaishakha which is attended by thousands of pilgrims. There is a popular legend about the construction of the temple which mentions that the cow of a shoe-maker of this area used to pour her milk on a particular sand dune, of her on accord. Out of curiousity the cowherd who was incharge of her, dug up the dune and found the present idol of Mahaveer. People from neighbouring areas came to take the image which inspite of strenuous efforts remained immovable. At last the image had to be enshrined here itself.

Pushkar described earlier, is supposed to be the holiest of the Hindu Tirthas.

Like Pushkar is the sacred shrine of Galta in Jaipur. According to legends, this sanctuary of the Sun-Worshippers was once the 'Ashram' or the seat of sage, Galava, who performed his penance here. It is also believed that Nabhadas, the famous saint poet wrote his 'Bhaktamal' ( a biography of Brijbhasha poets in verse ) here.

If Galta is the headquarters of the Ramanuja Sect, Nathdwara situated 22 miles away from Udaipur, on the bank of the river Banas, is the celebrated centre of Ballabh Sect.

Etymologically meaning 'the portal of the God' Nathdwara is perhaps the richest Hindu shrine in India with enormous endowments. The image of Lord Krishan enshrined here is said to be as old as 1200 B.C. and was exiled from Brij in the regin of of Aurangzeb in the 17 the century.

About the construction of the temple at this particular place, it is said that the divinity while travelling towards the capital of Mewar, the Chariot wheels sank deep in to the earth and inspite of strenuous efforts remainedun-extricated. Upon this, an omen interpreted that the God wanted to dwell there. Considering it as the manifestation of God's will the image was taken out from the vehicle and in due time a temple was erected here. One can find here those, says Col. Tod' whom ambition has cloyed, superstition unsettled, satiety disgusted, commerce ruined or crime disquieted as ascetic attendants on the mildest of the Gods of India'. Not far from Nathdwara is Kankroli, another famous fane of Ballabh Sect. The temple which is surrounded by a picturesque lake, Rajsamand, was erected in Vikram Samwat 1727 and attracts a large number of pilgrims every year.

That Shaaivism has been one of the most popular faiths in Rajasthan is evident from the shrine of Ekling. The titulary divinity of the Mewar Kings situated in a defile about six miles north of Udaipur. The fane of Eklinga is of white marble with pyramidal pinnacles. Under an open-vaulted temple supported by columns, and fronting the four-faced divinity, is the bronzed bull Nanda of the natural size.

The priests of Eklinga are known as Goswamis who have to adopt celibacy. The Ranas of Mewar, as the 'Dewans' of Shiv when visited the temple used to supersede the high priest in his duties and performed the ceremonies themselves.

Illustrative of the popularity of Shakta cult in Rajasthan is the famous shrine of Goddess Karani situated at Deshnok, a small village near Bikaner.[7] This shrine has already been described in detail in the context of Karani Mata Fair.

Symbolic of Rajasthan's religious tolerance and respect for others faiths is the Dargah of Khwaja Sahib being the principal sacred place of the Muslims of India is visited by thousands of pilgrims every year. Consisting of a Mausoleum raised over the remains of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, a mosque built by Shahjahan, a Buland Darwaza and Mahfil Khana, the Dargah commands highest veneration of the Muslims.

Khwaja Moinuddin is belived to have possessed miraculous powers enabling him to do things like ensuring child birth, curing all the aliments, warding off evil spirits, ensuring good luck. He is held by his devotees in such a high esteem that he is placed next only to the Almighty.

To perpetuate the memory of this great saint of Ajmer his death anniversary is celebrated every year in the form of Urs and the votaries of Islam and devotees of the Khwaja throng at the holy place from all over India and Pakistan to pay their respectful homage and to seek and receive blessing of the Sufi saint. The Urs of this holdy personage is observed on the day of the union of his soul with the Supreme Spirit of Universal soul. All the pilgrims make rich offerings ( Najrana ) at the holy spot where the Khwaja was entombed in the Dargah. Although it belongs to the Sufis of Chishti order, it is venerated by Muslims of all sects; and even Hindus participate in the celebrations. The Dargah, situated at the foot of the northern extremity to Taragarh, covers a large area where his devotees later on constructed impressive buildings, most of which are monuments of architectural beauty.

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## 5

# FOLK-SONGS AND DANCES

Rajasthan has a rich heritage of folk-songs. There are songs for men, for women and for children, appropriate for every auspicious occasion. However, the emotional effusion has found Its best expression in the songs of women.

Thakur Ram Singh, a noted scholar of Rajasthani folk-lore has made the following observations dwelling on the significance of folk-songs of Rajasthan.

"Song is the food of human life. From the earliest times the human heart has come singing along. Guiding his plough in the scorching rays of the sun the peasant forgets its intense heat by his song; going through a dark night the camel driver walks along warbling and the feeling of the vast emptiness of the desert is forgotten; the cart man tuning his voice to the da-chuk da-chuk of the wheels on a bright night passes mile after mile; in the jungle where the sheep are grazing the shephered makes the whole jungle echo to his song and not only to his voice but to his heart comes the echo; at the well . the drawer of water encourages the oxen to go forward, the labourer who carries bricks and clav puts spirit into his work by singing and the hardness of his life is forgotten......

"Slowly and gradually folk-songs spread themselves ( lit. spread their legs ). Falling into the hands of bards they went on long journeys. They were carried along on the lutes of musicians, the lays of Pabuji became battle songs; devotees of the god

Bhairav sang them with their bag pipes; beggars burst out singing them with their fiddles. From house to house the sentiments of love, compassion, courage and peace flowed in a stream. You need give no more than a piece of dry bread as a reward to-day and you can have the joy of immersing in this current.

"Surmounting the four walls these songs came inside our homes. But these songs did not come into–they germinated and flowered in the home. They have their inception and their being in the hearts and lives of women. India has always had her poetesses, and one can even to-day see songs taking shape and receiving additions from some quick-witted woman who improvises in the gaiety or emotion of the occasion, and her verse is taken up and carried on by her companions, So it must have been from the beginning. These songs are the product of the group, no matter who first began a particular song. The song lives and is valid only if it records and interprets the common experience.

"Women began to sing the morning songs as they ground and churned, mothers sang lullabies, sisters poured over their brothers the love of their hearts. Wives sang to please their husbands; they sang songs about the sadness of separation, they sent messages home ( their parents ) with the crows and the cranes, and they complained of the lonely bed (when the husband was away at war or for commerce ). The pot was placed on the head and the jar on the pot, they went to fetch water, and the water carriers drowned the world in a flood of words. Even to-day, in the evening, after finishing the work women and girls will be gathered together for singing.

"How much women have sung; From the pregnancy song ( Simanta ) the child in the womb drank the juice of song; for the newly born child the birth songs were sung; the babe slept and woke in the lap of the mother as lullabies fell from her lips. When the child put on the sacred thread songs were sung. When he sat to read ( his first lessons ) songs were sung. A wedding took place and the mother mad with joy called the other women to sit and sing the bridegroom songs.

"The bride and groom come home, songs bid them welcome. There was a celebration in the home, without songs how could it be complete ? Festivals came, songs to be sung were an absolute necessity.

"Our whole family life is a Song of Woman."1

From the foregoing description it is obvious that there is a rich variety in the folk songs of Rajasthan. In appendix-4 of this book, some representative songs echoing the emotional life of women in their family relationships have been given.

The revelations which these songs make of the inner life of women are of the greatest value to all who are interested in the long enduring and beautiful pattern of life in Rajasthan and of the psychology of the women who live it The songs are a unique revelation of their thoughts and feelings because these women are otherwise inaritculate, and have nowhere left for us any written record of how they looked out on life. It may well be that we shall find in their artless expression a well nigh universally true picture of the heart of women, especially those who live in old established village conditions.

The affinity of the village with the women who dwell there has been set forth by Rabindranath Tagore :

"Villages are likewomen. In their keeping is the cradle of the race. They are nearer to Nature than towns, and are therefore in closer touch with the fountain of life. They have the atmosphere which possessses a natural power of healing. It is the function of the villages. Like that of women, to provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy, with the simple poetry of life, and with those inner ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produces and in which she finds delight."

## The Form

The characteristic form of the folk songs is the Doha or couplet which may or may not be rhymed. Stress is indicated by long and short vowels, but the metre is simple and often irregular. Sometimes the couplets are grouped together into a sort of stanza.

An important feature is the refrain, which is frequently repeated. It may be just one line or a couplet or the lines may end with jingling words, which have no particular meaning, but which serve to convey emotion if said in different ways. They also make it possible for all the group to join in the song even when it is rather unfamiliar to some of the women, e. g., those who may be visiting from another place as on the occasion of a wedding.

The favourite figure of speech is the hvperbole which is freely employed. The house is commonly referred to as "the palace" the husband is "the king". and so on.

Other qualities, such as the concise dramatic telling of an event, or brief pictorial description, will be apparent to anyone who reads or listens to the songs. They have indeed many of the common charactersitics of folk verse everywhere, but in a heightened form.

### Folk-Dances[2]

Folk-dances play an important part in the village life of Rajasthan where all the year round there is a regular cycle of festivals, fairs, marriges and other auspicious occasions. Besides the dances presented on such occasions, there are dances to please the powers that are believed to bring famine or rich harvest. The Bhils in Udaipur division of Rajasthan perform a peculiar dance when they are to appease the God of rains. At the sight of gathering clouds they run out and dance in joy till the rain showers. Sometimes, the Bhill girls in various groups go singing and dancing in the jungle in search of a healthy buffalo to be sacrificed to Goddess Kali who is supposed to bring an end to drought and bestow rains.

### Bhawai Dances

Bhawai, in Rajasthan is a low caste which is said to originate from Jats who for their amusement's sake created this separate section of people who took up dance and Drama as their profession. The dances of Bhawai being free from any religious or superstitious ideas, reflect the real events of day to day life. They picturesquely depict the scenes of Baniya, Barber or the mony-lenders who are considered to be in the exploiting class in villages. Being humorous in nature, people do not mind even their bitter satires depicted in their dances and enjoy their performances in the lighter vein. The Bhawais, out of the twelve months of the year remain outside of their homes for eight months. During this period, they go from village to village in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat where their Yajmans or patrons are scattered over. The Bhawais have an upto-date record of their yajmans. It is noticeable that ladies never participate in these performances. The Bhawais take it against the prestige of women. In one of the Bhawai dances entitled 'Bohra-Bohari' or the 'money lender and his wife', the picture of a village merchant or Baniya is depicted in a humorous manner. One man dresses himself like a village Bohra and the other like a Bohri and then they dance together displaying the activities of these village money lenders by different movements.

The character of a corrupt blind Sadhu is depicted in the Bhawai dance of Soordas. Most of the village ladies are frightened at the sight of the Sadhu whom some of the village ladies like also. The surdas in his dance displays some miracles of exercises also.

The 'Lodi-Bodi' dance depicts the story of an old man having two wives who are always making their home a battle field of the Mahabharata. The husband tries his best to satisfy them but meets with failure. The dangerous results of more than one marriage are mainly manifested in this dance.

Dokari is the most homorous of Bhawai dances. The dresses worn by the participants in this dance are very peculiar and laughter-provoking. An old lady for the sake of money marries her daughter to a demoralised, corrupt and wicked man who is dressed like a giant. He troubles her daughter mercilessly.

From the artistic point of view, the best dance of Bhawais is Shankaria. Shankaria is a young snake—charmer who loves a Jogin. The Jogin loves him too but she conceals her love, outwardly displaying that she does not like him. Inwardly, she has an immense love for him. She reveals this secret very skillfully by her interesting movements. The romance of two youthful hearts is the subject of this dance.

One of the dances displays the love of Bikaji the founder of Bikaner, and his queen. Joys of union and sorrows of their separation are painted in this picturesque dance.

Dhola Maru is a famous romantic composition of Rajasthani literatute. Dhola is a symbolic name of the husband and Maru or Marvani of his beloved. Their intensive love for each other is depicted in the dance of 'Dhola-Maru' by various fascinating physical movements. Drums, songs and vocal sound-effects accompany all these dances.

In addition to these Bhawai dances, Jhumar, Ghoomar, Gauri, Banjara etc. are the other folk-dances of Rajasthan which enliven tha spectators with their fascinating poses and lead them to a state of forgetfulness.

### Ghoomer

Ghaghra is a traditional garment of Rajasthani ladies. The ladies of the South Eastern part of Bikaner, Jalore, Pali and Shekhawati are experts at this dance. Dancing in circles, clapping with small sticks or wooden swords, its display is of course very attractive and full of charm. It is particularly presented at the Nav Ratra and the Gangaur, the famous festivals of Rajasthani ladies.

### Jhumer

It is a group dance like Garba of Gujrat. Jhumer has been named after the Jhumka or a sort of earing worn by Rajasthani ladies. Bead ornaments and flowers lend characteristic flavour to this dance. In the fairs of Jagdishji at Alwar, Teej at Jaipur, Matri Kundi at Udaipur, this dance can be witnessed. There are two kinds of Jhoomer. In the first kind of Jhoomer, a man and a woman dance together whereas in the other a young lady dances alone displaying the different poses with graceful movements

### Gauri

This famous Bhil Dance depicts the life of Shiva. A Bhil takes the part of Shiva with a huge mask while two men dress themselves as Parwati and Uma. There are other dancers who are followers of Shiva. In the centre, there is a Bhopa who is said to be possessed by Shiva. The dance being after a short time, the devil appears on the scene. Shiva fights the devil who finally surrenders. This dance is performed in the month of September. Banjara dance is also a kind or Bhil dance. The Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal of Udaipur headed by Shri D. L. Samar has done commendable services for the promotion and popularisation of Rajasthani Folk dances.

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# 6

# LEGACY OF LITERATURE

Rajasthan has not only maintained its glorious traditions of chivalry and heroism, but has equally excelled in the sphere of scholarship and learning. It was here that poets like Magha, Bihari, Padmaker, Mira, Dadu, Sundardas and a great galaxy of literary luminaries enriched the treasure of literature with their outstanding creative contribution. However, the most distinguished feature of Rajasthan's literary heritage is its Dingal literature, mostly written by the bardic community of charanas. This attempt has, therefore, been kept confined only to the coverage of this particular aspect.

The literature written by the bards is available in two different forms of language, namly the Pingala and the Dingala. The former is the Braja Bhasa more or less adulterated and vitiated by the introduction of local words and idioms while the latter is the literary form of old Marwari, one of the principal Rajasthani dialects.[1] The Marwari or old western Rajasthani like Punjabi and Pahari also sprang up from Apbhramsa.[2] But it is difficult to determine the exact period of gaining its separate entity. Historians of Rajasthani language and literature have divergent opinions on this issue. One section believes that it was some time at the beginning of the eleventh century that as a progeny of Apbhramsa it started developing into an independent language.[3] Another section is of the view that its evolution began in the thirteenth century.[4] Since linguistic changes and transformations take place quite slowly, some times taking even many centuries, this difference of opinion is not very significant. What is important is that by the seventeenth century the dialect of Marwari had become completely standardized through use for literary purposes attaining maturity and had come to be called Dingala in due course of time. The standardized old marwari characterised with its elaborateness of diction and currency of poetical and obsolete words different from the colloquial ones was known as Dingala only in the context of versified compositions. Tessitori while dwelling on the development of Dingala has preferred the term 'old western Rajasthani' for old Marwari[5] and has observed that there were two stages of Dingala, the old one beginning from the 13th century A.D. and the later one from the beginning of the 17th century A.D. onwards.[6]

Excluding the works produced by Bhats in Pingala rest of the bardic literature is mainly the creation of the charanas and is written is Dingala.[7] There has been considerable debate[8] on the use of the nomenclatures of Pingala and Dingala for Brij Bhasa and Marwari respectively in poetical contexts and there is no use of falling further more into this controversy. However, it will be quite relevant to describe here the salient features of Dingala which was nursed and adopted as the vehicle of expression by the charans for more than five centuries.

As it has been already indicated, Dingala is the literary form of Marwari yet there are certain distinct features which make difference between the two. While Marwari in its capacity as a dialect was confined to a small region, Dingala as a language of poetry was in use all over Rajasthan by the charanas. Thus Dingala was able to imbibe in itself all the choicest words of the different dialects spoken in various parts of Rajasthan and was further strengethened and enriched by the schalorship and talent of charana poets who built it up as a powerful medium of poetry.[9]

The lexicon of Dingala is sufficiently large and it consists of words from various Indian languages with some admixture of Arabian and Persian words. While eighty percent of the vocabulary is woven by the words of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbhramsa, almost five percent of the words are derived from Arabic and Persian stock.[10] These words are mostly variations of the original form for the bards twisted the words quite freely suiting their convenience of rhyme and metre. They acted almost as dictators in the world of lexicography and coined a large number of words. This freedom was very often exercised to the extent that a word became almost unintelligible to the listener or the reader. The following instances which can be multiplied many times will perhaps be suggestive enough to prove the point.

| | Original word | Corrupt form in Dingal. | Meaning. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Masjid ( Arabic ) | Masit | Mosque. |
| 2. | Gulam ( Arabic ) | Gola | Slave. |
| 3. | Asik ( Arabic ) | Asak | Lover. |
| 4. | Begana ( Persian ) | Bidana | Indifferent. |
| 5. | Bakhtar ( Persian ) | Bagatar | Armour. |

It is interesting to note that once a stalwart corrupted a particular word, it was conservatively followed by the successive generations of the bards. Many of the poetical and archaic words which were used by the poineers as back as five centuries were being used till the beginning of the twenteeth century and even today the Rajasthani poets of bardic style can not resist the temptation of clinging to these worn out words. This fashion of the preservation of archaic words in Dingala is easily explained by the existence of the poetical glossaries such as the Hamirnamamala, the Mana manjarinamamala etc. and the place that they have been finding in the curriculum of studies of the bards for more than three centuries.[11] A large portion of these obsolete words are borrowed from the vocabulary of Sanskrit poetry and it is chiefly to these that the outstanding richness in synonyms of Dingala is ultimately due. The Dingala Kosa of Misrana Murari Dana records as many as fifty five synonyms of 'earth' fifty of sword', fifty nine of 'king', fifty five of 'elephant', seventy of 'horse', fifty of 'sun', forty five of 'moon', forty eight of 'fire' and so on. Of course, the same richness of synonyms is not available in the case of other words of less frequent occurence, but all the same they are note worthy as indicative of the lexicographic recources and tendencies of Dingala.

**Bardic poetry**

There are no two opinons on the point that poetry forms the bulk of bardic literature by the charanas. This vast magnitude of poetical compositions is found in the forms of panegyrics, commemorative songs, heroic ballads and works relating to religion, romance and prosody. The works coming into these various categories have in most cases been titled after the name of their heroes whe were invariably the patrons of the bards. While doing so, the bards after the name of the hero either added words signifying the type of composition or the metre used in a particular work. The following few titles from the stupendous stock of bardic poetry will suffice to substantiate this contention.

( i ) works after the name of heroes with forms of **composition.**

( a ) Rasau — Raimala Rasau, Ratan Rasau, Sagat Singh Rasau etc.

( b ) Prakasa — Raj Prakasa, Suraj Prakasa, Bhim Prakasa etc.

( c ) Vilasa — Raj vilasa, Jag Vilasa, Abhey Vilasa, Ratan Vilasa, etc.

( d ) Rupaka -– Raj rupaka, Rao Rinmala Ro rupaka, Maharaja Gaj Singh ji Ro rupaka etc.

( ii ) Works after the name of heroes **with metres used there in.**

( a ) Nisani — Goge ji chauhan ri nisani, Maharaja Pratap Singh ji ri nisani, nisani Biramana ri, Rao Khangar ri nisani etc.

( b ) Jhulana — Raja Gaj Singh ra Jhulana, Rao Surtrana ra Jhulana, Amar Singh ji ra Jhulana etc.

( c ) Veli or Vela — Raja Kumar Anoop Singh ji ri Vela, Raja Rai Singh ji ri Vela, Raja Suraj Singh ji ri Vela, Rana Udai Singh ji ri Vela etc.

( d ) Jhamala — Bidawat Karamasena Himat Singhota ri Jhamala, Jhamala Jor Singh chanpavata ri, Jhamala Auwa ri etc.

( e ) Geet — Durasa Adhara Geet, Panwara ra Geet, Rathore Ram Singh ji ra Geet, Raja Rai Singh ji ra Geet etc.

( f ) Kavitta — Maharaja Abhey Singh ji ra Kavitta, Rathore Tetangi ra Kavitta, Jodhpur Maharaja Gaj Singh ra nirvana ra Kavitta, Chauhan Sanwaldas ji Karam Singh ji ra Kavitta etc.

( g ) Duha — Pabuji ra Duha, Rao Amar Singh ra Duha, Rana Sanga ra Duha, Hamira Ranai ra Duha, Lakhan Phulani ra Duha etc.

Although the above referred works together with hundreds of the like were written by different writers and at different places and times, the pattern of composition is more or less the same. Often in the beginning there is the eulogy of the gods and goddesses which is invariably followed by the genealogy of the hero's family and by the bombastic description of the great deeds of his predecessors. This introductory part of the works with a few exceptions is very dreary and monotonous. The main story begins with the gallant fight of the hero and his army with the enemy on the battle-field. The rapid succession in which the events are graphically described one after another gives to the verses a movement which generally appears vivid and pleasant. Very often the story either culminates into the brilliant victory of the hero or his glorious death.[12]

According to Dr. M. L. Menariya the history of bardic poetry written over a period of more than five hundred years can be roughly divided into the following periods:—

( 1 ) Early period ( v.s. 1450 to v.s. 1600 )

( 2 ) Medieval period ( v.s. 1600 to v.s 1900 )

( 3 ) Modern period ( from v s. 1900 onwards ). This division appears to be quite convincing because the bradic institution of charanas as well as the language of Dingala both had come into its own only by the end of the fourteenth century. What is attributed prior to this period is either disputed or is not completely free from the influence of Apbhramsa. This chronological order is, therefore, being followed here for the purpose of presenting a sweeping survey of the bardic literature written by the charanas.

The bardic literature of the early period consists of mainly eulogistic writtings and lacks that refinement and elegance which followed later on. Yet its significance lies in the wealth of historical information that it provides. But at the sametime it may not be forgotton that in the bardic poetry of Rajasthan fact is so much masked by fiction or so disfigured by hyperboles that it requires a rigorous process to find out the kernel of truth. As tessitori has remarked "In the magniloquent strain of a charana, everything takes a gigantic form, as if he was seeing the world through a magnifying glass, every skirmish becomes a Mahabharata, every little hamlet a Lanka, every warrior a gaint who with his arms up holds the sky". Inspite of this element of high exeggeration, the usefulness of this literature can not be ruled out totally to the advantage of history. It will have to be borne in mind in this connection that the bard is not supposed to possess the historian's conscience about facts, obviously for the reason that he was more concerned to rouse and delight his audience, to flatter the pride of his patron in whose halls he sang. He often brought in real names and events but he shifted them as would best suit his dramatic scenery or picturesque descriptions. As such it is clear that what the bard or the poet relates may be fiction but what he mentions is apt to be history. In the names and narratives, he unconsclously portrays for us the life in his own times. Viewed in this perspective, the early bardic poetry is of great help in resonstructing the history of Rajasthan of those times.

One of the notable works of this period is 'Achaldas Khichi ri vachanika' by Charan Sivadas. The work which is in rhymed prose intermixed with verses celebrates the stubborn resistance given by Achala Dasa to the ruler of Mandu who had invested the stronghold of Gagurana. The heroic death courted by Achala Das and his garrison, sword in hand, after committing Jauhar ( sacrificing of women alive in fire ) when the place was at last expugned. 'The style of the composition is uncouth and archaic enough to obstruct the full understanding of the text, however, it becomes clear that it was contemporary with the events and its author, Sivadas represents himself as a writness, who sustained the siege in Gagurana till the very last moment when he managed safety for himself to survive and then be able to immortalize the heroic death of the Khici, his master.[13] As mentioned above, the bardic tendency of exaggerating things has also adversely affected the correctness of the account contained in this composition. For example when the bard describes the army of the Patisaha of Mandu as being assisted by an army led by the emperor of Dilli in person his name is given Alim Ghori which is only the creation of the bard's imaginative mind.

Another poet of this period worth mention was pasait Gadana who wrote Rao Rinmal Ro Rupak and Ganjodhayana both extolling the exploits of his patrons. The former is a poem in chhandas, Duhas, kavittas and gathas on Rathore Rinamala, the chief of Mandaur and the trecherous death he met in the palace of Rana Kumbha of chittora while the latter is a panegyric written in honour of Rao Jodha the founder of Jodhpur.

The most outstanding contribution of the charanas to literature in this period lies in two poetical works namely, the Dhola-Maru and Chanda Rao Jeta si ro by Kallola and vithua Sujo respectively. Dhola Maru is the most populgr love legend based on the amours of Dhola, the son of Nala, Raja of Nalvara and Maru or Marwani, the daughter of Rao Pingala of Pugala, written in duhas, the most favourite metre of the charanas, this poem has been in great demand by the lovers of Rajasthani poetry and has fascinated several painters to reproduce in colours many a love-scenes based on its contents.

The work titled 'Chanda Rao Jeta Si ro' by Vithu Sujo is of great historical importance. It was composed by the bard who was at the stipend of rao jeta si of Bikaner about the year 1535 A.D. to celebrate a victory of his patron over Kamaran, the son of Babar who had attacked the former to realize his territorial ambitions. In view of the fact that no Muhammadan historian has recorded this battle, this work can rightly claim the credit of filling a short gap in the history of India. It reveals that Babar before defeating Abrahim Lodi and occupied many important towns and villages in the territory of erstwhile Bikaner State. It also throws light on the mounting strength of the mughals in those times and the unsuccessful resistence given by the Rajput and other tribes. The subject of this work is not confined to the battle alone in which Kamran faced reverses, but also embodies in its introduction the milltary exploits of Rao Jeta si's ancestors. This part of the work forms a sort of testimonial documents for the early history of Bikaner. It is perhaps the oldest account reduced to writing that has been preserved about this historic state. Besides providing factual information, this book portrays a vivid picture of the Rajput attitude of terror, hatred and consternation in the face of their critical confrontation with the mughals. It is relevant to mention that the event of Rao Jeta Si's victory over Kamran has been commemorated in a number of extemporaneous songs In one of such songs, Rao Jet si is described as a goldsmith who melts in the crucible and heats, and weights, and cuts the gold of army of Kamram.[14] Another song suggests that he made the army of enemy dance like an acrobat. Thus these songs not only verify the historicity of the battle between Rao Jet si and Kamram described by vithu Sujo in Chanda Rao Jeta si ro but also testifies the valour and gallantry of Rao Jet si.

The medievel period ( v.s. 1600 to v.s. 1900 ) witnessed a phenomenal development of bardic literature in all its directions. The charana poets of this era touched new dimensions in the realm of forms of composition, style, subject matter and technical devices. Since these three centuries were quite eventful, the current of literature also continued taking turns with the vicititudes in socio-political conditions. The variety and richness in the poetry of these times is easily explained when one peeps into the various phases of struggle, despondence, peace, prosperity and complascence through which the Rajput princes passed over this long span of history. The early decades of the decadence of Rajput power with their religious fanaticism and the advent of Muhammadans pushed the public at large in a state of distress and self defeat. It was in this mental disposition of the Rajput Chiefs and their subjects that the Bhakti movements of Ramanuja-Charya, Nimbakacharya etc. also had their sway. As a result, the Rajput rulers embraced various religious cults and installed seats for the promotion and propegation of these in their respective capitals. It is for this reason that the initial stage of this period abounds in religious and devotional works. The most outstanding poet of this order was Barhatha Isardas ( v.s. 1595 to v.s. 1675 ) who was highly revered as a saintly man both in Rajasthan and Gujarat. He was considered so much sacred that people used to say 'Isara so Parmesara' ( Isardas is another God ).[15] Looking to his immense popularity, it will not be an exeggeration to say that Isardas occupies the same position in Dingala poetry which Surdas and Tulsidas have in Hindi.

Surprisingly enough, Isardas not only wrote devotional songs but equally excelled in heroic poetry. While his Hariras occupying the position of a sacred text is recited in the homes of Rajputs and charanas all over Saurastra and Gujrat,his Halan Jhalai ri Kundaliyan is a superb piece of heroic poetry. Although very thin in volume containing only fifty verses, this book has carved out for itself a privileged position in the medieval bardic literature for its stylistic presentation, simplicity of diction and epigramatic bravity of expression. The composition written in Kundaliya Chanda describes the battle fought between one chieftain Jasaji of Hala dynesty and the other named Rai Singh of Jhala sept of Rajput community who were close relations. The beauty of this composition lies in its quality of suggestiveness which is hidden in the out bursts of Jasaji's life. The poet through the spouse of the hero pays tribute to the gallantry of the warriors in a very subtle manner. "Oh darling; burn that village which is not trodden by the beaming heroes, where no cry of the wounded soldiers is heard and where the valiants are looked down upon as poor creatures.

"Set the village to fire where the dormant fighters dwell like pitiable souls and where the soldiers neither forbear the wounds on their bodies nor smash the enemy's army."

Besides the above referred work, he has written many miscellaneous songs also based on this battle wherein he has bestowed effusive praise on Jasoji, admiring his valour and gallantry.[16]

Isardas was a prolific poet having as many as seventeen works to his credit including eulogical songs, gnomic verses and heroic poems. But his eminence is primarily reckoned with as a towering saint poet. So many miracles are ascribed to him that he had become a living legend in his life time. The best known among his devotional works is Hari Ras which has gone into several prints resulting into considerable variations in its text. Isardas in this volume has propounded in accordance with the principles of Vedant, the omnipresence and omnipotence of God in a very simple and lucid style and has claimed in the concluding duha that even the most wreched persons could be exonerated of their sins by doing a daily reading of this sacred book.[17]

Sanyaji ( v.s. 1639 to v s. 1703 ) was another saint-poet of eminence of this era who though was born in the illustrious charan family of the Jhula sept refrained from singing the praise of any mortal and distinguished himself by writing devotional poetry alone. Besides miscellaneous songs, his two works namely the Naga-damana and Rukmani Harana are quite well known. The former is based on a mythological legend contained in Srimad-bhagawat while the latter describes the story of the wedding of Krishna and Rukmani. The lavish patronage received by Sanyaji from Rao Viramdeva and his successor Rao Kalyanmala was in sharp contrast to the practice prevelant in that period in as much as these patrons presented two lakh pasavas to the poet and granted him a village in Jagir without consideration of any return.[18]

How poetic talents could bring fabulous fortunes to a bard is proved by the biography of charan Durasa Adha. His father, it is said, under stress of dreadful poverty was forced to abandon family life and to become a sanyast.[19] Yet, it was Durasa whose powerful poetry procured for him the royal patronage of many a princes. The king of Bikaner, Raja Rai Singh gave him in gift as many as four villages, one elephant and presented a crore pasava.[20]

Durasa Adha was not only capable of weilding the power of pen but of the sword too. It was in a battle that the victorious Rao Surtana of Sirohi found him hopelessly wounded with the soldiers of the enemy and saved his life when he disclosed his identity as a charan and recited a heroic couplet extemporaneously. The encounter of the poet with Rao Surtana is also verified by an account contained in a collection of prose chronicles catelogued by Tessitori. It is also on record that the Rao was so much pleased with him that he granted him tax free revenue of two villages and honoured him with a crore pasava.[21] It is also said of him that he had become a trusted lieutenant of emperor Akbar and was conferred high honours and rewards by him. But this contention is not corroborated by any historical evidence and it appears that the later generation of bards concocted such stories to glorify a literary luminary of their community. Although Durasa did not write any epic, yet he was a master of metres. His heroic songs and couplets are highly inspiring and full of fire. The most outstanding work ascribed to Durasa is Birada Chihatari containing seventy six verses in praise of Maharana Pratap of Chittor who when all other Rajput rulers of Rajasthan submitted to the Mughal power fought gallantly for his independence. Although Pratap finally lost the battle, yet Durasa projected his image like a God which was in the true spirit of a bard whose main concern is that his hero should show his prowess and be crowned with success as the manifest token of his superiority. Considering the concept of nationalism as concieved in those times, Durasa Adha's place in bardic poetry is that of a National poet who tried to infuse patriotism and sense of pride in the Rajput surrendering to Mughal suzerainity. He was so much held high in esteem that a statue of his was installed and displayed at a prominent place in the temple of Achaleswar mahadeva on mount Abu, the only hill station of Rajasthan.

The modern age of Rajasthani poetry made a beginning with the 19th century dominated by the genius of Surya Mal of Bundi, the writer of Vamsa Bhaskar and Veer Satsai. Few have attained such excellence in the writing of heroic poetry as Surya Mal. Dr. K. R. Kanungo has given the following account about this great literary gaint :—

"Surajmal Mishan was born in or about 1816 A. D. Under the patronage of Maharao Ram Singh ji he composed in eight parts ( rashi ) his historical epic in verse, the Vamsa-bhaskar, covering in four volumes four thousand and fortythree pages in print. This work is, in our opinion, much more valuable as history than the far-famed Prithviraj Raso. As a literary product it deserves to be classed as the nineteenth century Mahabharat of India in multifold metres and variations of Hindi. The author has skillfully woven to his own time. Its value lies in a grand collection of historical materials specially for a picture of medieval Rajput society. He was a man of extremely independent temperament caring little for the favour or frown of his patron. He chronicles facts and legends not always flattering to his patron's house. He was indefatiguable in collecting materials from every corner of Rajputana. But he was not critical in treating his materials, as no poet can ever afford to be. He was proud of his learning,and once he rejected the much coveted honour of the gift of langer ( gold anklet ) from his patron saying that he did not wish to yield to gold a recognition due to his vidya alone.

"Surajmal Mishan met the common lot of historians; namely, disappointment, unsteady fortune and oblivion. Bundi forgot everything about the author of the Vamsa–bhaskar within 30 years of his death. All that we know of him Is a reminiscence recorded by a great Charan scholar, Sri Krishna Singh Verma, the commentator of Surajmal's epic. One thing remembered about him is that he used to sip wine constantly except in sleep, and yet never betrayed the sign of intoxication. Wine was indeed an aid to his normalcy and poetry. He would not forego his cup even when summoned to the Darbar.

"It once happened that the news of the death of Maharaja Balawant Singh Rathore of Rutlam reached Surajmal in an assembly of friends and admirers in his house. He said to his friends that it was not proper that people should individually offer oblations of water ( jalanjali ) each in his own house for the peace of the soul of such a generous ruler. He went in company to the lake of Bundi; but the sight of water seemed to have had marred the effect of his cups. So he said, "It is not proper that without the recitation of a poem of praise oblations should be offered on such an occasion." So he sent a Charan named Haralya to fetch flagons from his house. He drank three cups to wake up his slumbering Clio, and offered oblations of water reciting a forceful extempore panegyric in honour of the dead.

"Some disappointment perhaps came upon Surajmal before the completion of his work, He lived about eight or ten years in retirement till his death at fiftythree in 1869 A.D. It was no princely initiative but a private enterprise of the Charan fraternity initiated by Kavirajah Muraridanji of Jodhpur that has rescued the poet-historian's memory from oblivion by publishing the Vamsa-bhaskar."

"A generation after Surajmal Mishan, was born Kavirajah Shyamaldas ji of Mewar, known to fame as the author of Virvinod ( Hindi ) now available in print in five thick volumes. Though himself a Charan of medieval stock, modern method of research on a comprehensive scale dawned upon Rajputana with Shyamal Das ji.

His ancestors were the hereditary "Pol-pat" ( Lit. "Lord of the Gate", i.e. the premier Charan ( who receives customary neg or gifts from the bridgegroom at the gate ), of the Sankhla Parmars of Koon of Cutch. When evil days came upon the Sankhalas they migrated to Mewar with their princely clients and settled down in Mewar. One of his ancestors received from the Maharana the village of Dadhiwara as sasan in religious charity which became the home of the family Some generations after, Shymaldas one of the four sons of Qaim Singh, was born in Dadhiwara on the seventh day of ths dark fortnight of the month of Asadh v. s. 1895 ( about 1837 A. D. ) He received a good education and became a renowned scholar in Sanskrit Poetics, which he taught in later life to his sister's son Charan Krishan Singhji of Shahpura, the commentator of Surajmal's Vamsabhaskar. Shymaldas ji grew up more than a scholar, a man of strong character and administrative abilities as he was. He rose in favour with Maharana Shambhu Singh ji, who entrusted to him the task of compiling a comprehensive and documented history of Mewar in collobration with Purohit Padamnath in 1871. They began their work, which was interrupted by the death of Shambhu Singh ji and the minority of his successor, Maharana Sajjan Singh ji. His abilities and scholarship raised him to greater eminence in the reign of the new Maharana, who made him a confidential adviser and appointed him as Librarian of the Palace Library of Udaipur. He was given the title of Kavirajah in 1879 by the Udaipur Darbar. In a biographical sketch of Shymaldas ji, M. M. Ojha says:--

"When Col. Impey, the Political Agent in Udaipur, made an earnest request to the Maharana for compiling a history of Mewar, the Maharana ordered Shymaldas ji to compile a detailed history entitled Vir vinod. One lakh of rupees was put at the disposal of Shyamaldas ji, who established the office of Itihas karyalaya, appointed for his assistance competent scholar in Sanskrit, English, Arabic and Persian etc and set about making a magnificent collection of inscriptions, copper plates, coins, historical works in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and English etc. besides old pattahs, parwanas, firemans, nishans and official correspondence. He wrote a voluminous work the printing of which was completed only in the reign of Maharana Fateh Singh ji who succeeded Sujjan Singh ji in 1884."

"Kavirajah Shymaldas ji was also the chief adviser of Maharana Sajjan Singh ji in all his beneficient activities and reforms such as the survey and assessment of revenue, establishment of courts and the Council of Maharajasabha, improvement of the city ( of Udaipur ) with new buildings and in improving the condition of the people He was devoted to scholarship and appreciated the worth of scholars. He was a poet, a lover of history and an out-spoken man. He always gave right advice to his master and was thoroughly loyal. He had such a powerful memory that he never forgot what he had read once. He was instrumental in the Maharana's bestowal of gifts and honours to men of eminence and learning of his time."[22]

The pioneer poet of the period of freedom struggle was Kesri Singh Barhat who aroused the rulers and people of Rajasthan from their slumber. Udairaj Uijwal has also sung of the national movement for independence. Nathudan Mahiyaria is well known for his Veer Satsai which is the Swan Song of Raiput chivalry.[23]

There is a long tradition of prose writing in Rajasthani. Some sanada pattas of Prithvirai Chouhan written in Raiasthani prose have been discovered. A number of Jain writers have written commentaries or original books in Rajasthani prose. Early in the seventeenth century Jasmal wrote Gora Badal Ki Baat. A large number of khayats and vaats are well known of which Mahnot Naisi ri Khyat is the most famous. Bankidas, the poet, has written a large number of vats or stories which are quite interesting.

Although Rajasthani language suffered a great set-back during the British rule, however, it is gratifying to note that efforts made after the dawn of independence for its revival are gradually proving fruitful. The modern generation of writers is making a significant contribution to the growth of Rajasthani literature and the works of poetry and prose produced during the last two decades assure of a bright future.

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# 7

# FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS

The traditions of fine arts and crafts in Rajasthan are centuries old. The rulers as well as the people patronized painting, music, sculpture and other media of artistic expression quite liberally. Foreign influence, especially that of Persia and other Islamic countries, of course, modified the modes and patterns of these forms of aesthetic creations, yet they continued to flourish and stood against the heaviest odds.

## Music[1]

We may first take the case of Hindustani Music. As is well known this Music originated in the Delhi Court out of the old Indian system, but very little is now known about the form in which this music was performed in pre-muslim days and what exists today as Hindustani Music is its modified from after the introduction of the Persian Model. Great schools or Gharanas of the forms of music like Dhrupad, Dhamar and Khayal etc. sprang up and these were patronized by rulers of Rajasthan as by other rulers. Some of these gharanas exist even today. But no completely distinct mode of performing classical music originated in this state.

Apart from the rulers, the Vaisnava temples of Rajasthan also encouraged music and became great centres of this art and some special forms were developed at these places. The most important of these temples is of course the temple of Nathdwara where at different times of the day, throughout the year, various

Kirtans are sung. These Kirtans about 3000 in number are the compositions of "Ashta Sakhas" or the eight saint-musicians or the Vallabhcharya sect of Vaisnavas. The time and season of each of these Kirtans is fixed and so are the ragas for each piece which depend on the mood of the poetic compositions. Among the Ragas, it may be of interest to know that Bhairavi, one of the most popular Ragas in Hindustani music is prohibited in Nathdwara. The reason for this prohibition is that Tansen is said to have listened to this Raga from Sri Kumbhandasji one of the Ashta Sakhas—without his consent and hence it is considered corrupt. Other Ragas such as Pooriya Dhanashri, Miyan ki Malhar, Bilas Khani Todi, Jaunpuri etc., which are supposed to have been introduced either by outsiders or under outside influence are also taboo for these Kirtanas. The style of singing the Kirtanas are also some what different from that of the Court Musicians. The Kirtans are sung at the time of Darshanas and hence there is no scope of developing the ragas in the form of Alaps, except very occasionally. The talks used are mostly Chaital, Adital, Jhaptal, Dhamar, Deepchandi, Teevra etc. There is a great scope of study in the difference in the manner in which the ragas are sung at these Vaisnava temples and in the current Hindustani Music.

Apart from the classical Music there is a great fund of folk music existent in Rajasthan. These folk songs-Mand, Panihari etc., are truly National, in the sense that every Rajasthani seems to be familiar with the tunes and tries to sing or hum the songs whenever he feels musically inclined. This kind of universalities very rarely can be seen anywhere in Northern India except probably in the Punjab in the Heer Songs.

## Painting[2]

Though the music of Rajasthan may not be so well known outside the State, this certainly is not true of Rajasthani Paintings. Indeed, Buddnist, Mogul and Rajasthani with its off-shoot the Kangra are the three well known schools of Painting of India of the premodern times. Whether the Buddhist school of painting had any influence on the Rajasthani School is a matter of conjecture, but there is no denying the fact that the Mogul School of Painting greatly influenced the Rajasthani Painting and gave direct inspiration to its development. So far as is known, few Rajasthani paintings exist which date prior to the great days of Mogul Paintings at the time of Akbar and Jahangir. it would appear the Rajasthani school started flowering when some of the Rajasthanl court painters of Akbar and Jahangir came home and tried to improve the method of paintings used in the illustrations of Jaina manuscripts of Gujrat and Rajasthan. This school saw its greatest day when in the seventeenth century Aurangzeb stopped patronizing the artists and painters, who naturally flocked to the neighbouring Rajput courts. This is why there is a great deal of similarity between the Rajasthan and Mogul Painting. For one thing they are both miniature paintings, and life size of picture were almost never drawn except in the few instances where some of the palace walls were decorated. From the purely technical side also, that is so far as the materials used to concerned, they are almost the same, except that the Rajasthani Painters were more inclined towards red and gold colours. The figure represented is generally as a dark scheme against a light natural tinted or almost colourless background. No light and shade, or cast shadows are observable. Only a delicate toning and modelling are introduced to bring out the relief. The picture relies on its rich colouring, sympathetic outline drawing and decorative treatment for its artistic effect.

The difference between Mogul and Rajasthani painting is not, therefore, in the technique used, but in the approach towards this art and also in the people for whom the art was produced. While in the case of Mogul Paintings the attempt was always to depict nature in a realistic manner and the picture was meant to please the court, in the Rajasthani art the approach was essentially Indian, that is, it was symbolic. At the same time these paintings wera addressed not to the courts alone but to the people in general. In other words it was a popular art.

This is also evident in the subjects treated in Rajasthani painting. Though there is no dearth of portraits of Rulers and court scenes, the main topic is always love. In a country of child marriages, the easiest subjects for love scenes could be either love between married people or the eternal love of Radha and Krishna. This latter naturally would be more romantic. The painters of Rajasthan have seized on this Radha Krishna topic and depicted in hundreds of different ways all the stories and legends of these two lovers. In their love scenes, the nature is always helpful, the setiing is always exactly as required in the poems. The background reminds one of the Alaka of Meghdoot.

यत्रोन्मत्तभ्रमरमुखराः पादपा नित्यपुष्पा
हंस, श्रणीरचितरशना नित्यपद्मा नलिन्यः ।

( Where the trees are always in flower surrounded by beens where the lotus plants are always in bloom and with swans making garland round them.

And all the women are beautiful, again as in Kalidas :

तन्वीश्यामा शिखरिदशना पक्वबिम्बाधरोष्ठी
मध्ये क्षामा चकितहरिणीप्रेक्षणा निम्मनाभिः ।

( Slim and young and with small teeth and red lips, with slender waste and deep navel and with the frightened eyes of a deer. )

Since the attempt is to make everything symbolic, the ideal and not the real is depicted. For this same reason again, the animals have a slightly human look, for they are there to express a feeling, to symbolize an idea. In fact there is a great contrast in this respect with the Mougl Painting where the materialistic aspect of the subject is stressed—the hunting of the wild beasts, the fighting of rams, deers or elephants.

Mention in this connection may be made of the paintings known as the Ragmala, that is, the garlands of musical modes. According to one theory there are six principal ragas or the modes of music. For instance Hindola or Vasanta Raga is associated with spring. Then following are Deepaka, Megha, Bhaïrava, Malva and Sriraga. Each of these six ragas in its turn is wedded to five raginies, making all .together thirtysix ragas and raginies. This is an emotional situation associated with each raga or ragini and popular poems were composed in the 16th and 17th centuries describing the emotion, based on some mode of love, either union or separation. The raga painting is the visual representation of the emotion. For instance, Bhairavi describes the unmarried heroine, who like Parvati dreaming of her union with her lover, is absorbed in worshipping him; Vasanta is mostly seen as Krishna playing Holi with Radha and her companions.

### Frescos[3]

Rajasthan though abounds in wall paintings and frescos, yet the early history of this artistic form in this state in still obscure. History of fresco paintings earlier to 15th century still remains in the dark. Maharana Kumbha's palaces at Chitore are replate with such decorations and they are considered to be the earliest monuments of wall paintings in Rajasthan.

Then there are the famous wall paintings of "Bairath-Mougal Garden," which are estimated of 16th century. The explanation offerred by some of the art critics about the dearth of frescoes from 8fh to 15th Century is that as paper became available in 12th Century, the attention of the artists was diverated from big walls to the easier medium of paper and earlier to the palm leaf. The strength of the Jainism also compelled the artists to paint the religious subjects and a tradition was established to repeat the subjects of Kalka Charya Katha, Sangrahani Sutra and Kalpa Sutra etc. in manuscripts. Political disturbances also contributed greatly to the set-back to the art of fresco paintings.

However it appears that from the seventeenth century onwards. the frescoes had gained great popularity in Rajasthan and even now they are in vogue.

The Ajanta artists for sheer aesthetic pleasure found no better decorative motifs than the woman, but theRajasthan painters took delight in painting almost every aspect of human life. They were neither exclusively enthralled with the feminine beauty and grace nor did they paint that fleshy and sensuous youth of women that aroused fantastic reveries and passion. The frescoes found in Rajasthan are those of the gallant Sikaries hunting with spear and arrows, caparisoned elephants, marching troops and the rushing servants, reminiscent of the medialevel age of chivalry, splendour and glamour.

The subjects of wall and fresco paintings do not stop here. They also reflect the revival of Vaishnavism and the spread of the cult of Bhakti which explains for the depiction of moving milk maids, running cows and Lord Krishna playing flute with his beloved Radha etc. on the outer-walls of the residential houses of the commoners.

The art of fresco painting developed in almost all the prominent capital towns of Rajasthan including Jaipur.

Mughal Garden at Bairath, a place fifty miles away from Jaipur on the way to Delhi, palaces of Amber, Galta, Pundrikji Ki Haveli, Dusadh ki and Samod ki Haveli near Jangjeet Mahadeva in Jaipur and various buildings in Alwar, Rajgarh, Udaipur, Marwar, Bikaner, Kotah, Bundi and Nagaur consist in large numbers the fine speciman of frescoes and wall-paintings.

Most of the frescoes are found on walls polished with white plaster as a protective measure against the scorching sun of Rajasthan summer. The glazed plaster also contributes to reflecting the full brilliance of the colours which are mostly prepared from soft green and red stone locally known as "Hirmich", Ramraj, Kajal and Gugoli that are quite natural and do not fade out easily. Specimen of line drawings done in blue paint are also found frequently. The Rajasthan artistis, it is said, were renowned for their skill of colour-combinations and they received invitations from far off places to show their artistic talents.

In this age of "isms" and "experiments", it seems that little attention is being paid to this rich heritage, handed over to the posterities by "Pioneer Painters." No systematic survey of the frescoes and wall-paintings, has been conducted so far. The skilled artists and their followers who can further the link and can keep alive the stream of traditional currents of freseo and wall-paintings, are evidently being neglected. But there are artists who in their personal capacity are trying to revive and keep alive this tradition with jest and zeal. Kripal Singh Shekhawat Goverdhan Joshi and Devikinandan are prominent among them.

## Handicrafts[4]

Rajasthan has a rich heritage of handicrafts industries, which play an important role in the economy of this region. The principal products are the chintzes of Sanganer, embridery, woollen clothes, carpets, marble statuary, lacquer work *churis* ( bangles ), enamel work, jewellery, metal wares, pottery, hand-made paper, camel hide, ivory and sandalwood carvings, *mojdis* or peasant shoes of leather and water-containers.

The printer's location is the *Purani Basti*. Their history is obscure being derived from traditional sources. The printers trace their origin from Gujrat and their ancestors are supposed to have settled here in the time of Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh nearly twenty years after the foundation of the city.

The number of *chimpas* ( printers ) increased during the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh and Jagat Singh when their trade flourished.

Sanganer and Bagru, a village nearly fifteen miles to the west of Jaipur also has a number of printers. The process of manufacturing these prints is identical. Only Sanganer has more glowing colours and their dyes are more lasting,

## Tie and Dye work

Rajasthan is known for its tie and dye work. Though this type of work is being done in Jaipur now, the importont centres are in Marwar and Bikaner region. This work was first started in Marwar region during Maldeva's time but it got encouragement and impetus during the progressive regime of Sardar Singhji. In Bikaner this handicraft was at its best in Maharaja Ganga Singhji's time. Bikaner is known for dyeing work represented through *lahariya* and *mothada* patterns.

Silver and gold printing has its centres in Kishangadh Chittorgadh and Kotah. This type of workmanship is practised in Jaipur also. These are normally used by middle class women.

## Embroidery and Textiles

Needle craft occupies a unique place in the history of Rajasthan. The embroidery designs expressed even in the folk dresses are very fascinating. Like folk-lore and folk songs these designs in Rajasthan have come down from past many generations.

The Odhinis of Rajasthani women have interesting designs on them. Subtle combination and colour contrast can be found. Not only mirrors but beads, shells and metallic pieces are used to produce decorative designs The *Kairi* ( mango ), lotus, peacock elephants and camels are popular motif. Though U.P. is known for its Chikan work, this has, of late, begun to be produced in Jaipur as well.

So far as textiles go the *masuria malmal* produced in Kotah area is the finest. Cotton is used for *Susis*, narrow fabrics with alternating, dark blue and white or red vertical stripes, also for saris, richly embroidered, specially among the Jat women.

The woollen textiles of Rajasthan comprise of blankets and felts. Blankets of fairly good quality are made at Jaipur, Bikaner and Jodhpur. Todgarh in Ajmer is also known for its blankets. Bikaner is also famed for its serges. The felts of Jodhpur and Jaipur are exceptionally fine. They are usually white and are often ornamented by applique work.

Malpura, a village 52 miles to the south of Jaipur, prepares felted materials called *chakmas* or *ghogis*. The manufacturing process is as follows:--

Dressed wool of sheep is soaked in an infusion of soap, Gum ( Acacia ), alum and water. It is then spread upon the floor, over a piece of white cloth, in flakes, and formed into a particular shape. It is then beaten with a wodden handle until well set, This piece is then soaked again in the same solution and exposed to the sun. after which it is washed and marked with various colours, and patterns in red, yellow and green. These *chakmas* ahd *ghogis* are impervious to water.

### Carpets and mats

Rajasthani carpets are known for their fast colours, design and quality of craftmanship. Jaipur, Ajmer and Bikaner jails were at one time centers of carpet industry in Rajasthan. Though carpets are still being produced in the jails at Jaipur and Bikaner, they are not as good as they were before. Bikaner carpets, on the other hand, are famous for Vienna patterns and wool of superior quality. In Bikaner and Marwar area, wool is worked, not only into pile carpets of Persian design, but also into *durries* and *shatranjis*. There are some private factories in Jaipur which are producing good variety carpets.

### Marble statue

In Rajasthan, particularly in Jaipur, marble statues of deities, and toys of verious description are chiselled. Sculpture had attained the highest degree of perfection possible here.

The images are made of white Makarana or black Bhaislana marble, white being generally used for *Ganesh* and *Ram Chandra*, black for *Mahadeo* and *Krishna*. The common kind is made of soft stone. Most of them are highly coloured and gilted, and this is the principal index to their cost. The people engaged in the trade are generally Brahmins and are *Silawats*, living in one quarter of the city of Jaipur, called *Silawaton ka Mohalla*. Though this art of stone figure carving has been in practice in Rajasthan since the 1st century B.C., carving in marble was practised in the 12th century A.D. at Rajasthan. Though this work was started in the time of Sawai Jai Singh, it got impetus and encouragement in the time of Sawai Ram Singh. Of late, some workers have started turning out good but cheap stone replicas of classical figures at Thana Ghazi and in Kishori.

## Lacquered Work

Jaipur and Jodhpur have been known in Rajasthan for beautiful lacquered work, which is demonstarted not only in lac bangles and bracelets but also in toys and objects like a portable shrine, *hindola* ( swing ) and Issar and Gangour figures.

A singhasana (throne) of lacquered wood in the possession of His Highness of Bikaner belongs to the early part of Surat Singh's reign. This piece is of good workmanship.

## Shells bracelets

Another important manufacture in Rajasthan is that of *choories*, ornamental bracelets of shellac, worn generally by women. They are prepared and sold by a class of men called *manihars*, who follow this trade only. The method of manufacture is as follows:—

Ten seers of shellac is immersed in cold water and washed repeatedly until it is freed from all impurities and red colour begins to show itself in the water. An equal quantity of the dust of old bracelets is mixed in it and fine sand, twice its weight, is added; this mass is heated until it dissolves and forms a paste. It is then stretched into thick wires, which are turned by a wodden instrument of a conical shape, nearly a foot high called *latta*. *Choories* thus prepared, are placed, one upon another, round the instrument and the pyramid of bracelets when complete is called *muthia*. After this it is varnished with a paste, consisting of *chandras* ( vermilion ), verdigris, yellow sulphate of arsenic and indigo, according to the colours required red, green or blue. This varnished *muthia* is exposed to the sun and called *chura*. Such bracelets are generally worn by the lower class of women.

There are other bracelets, which are more costly. These are called *Gattis*. In preparing them the process is the same as far as its coloured coating after which a decoction of resin, sugar, Baingnian Katahlee is prepared. It serves as ink and with it ornamental figures are drawn on the *muthia* with a brush.

When painted patterns are nearly dry, leaves of gold called *tabak* are applied to the painted surface and the solution allowed to dry completely. After this process, small points of fine gold are set upon the ornamental work by the light of the lamp with a pair of tongs. This process requires utmost skill and concentrated attention, as the slightest carelessness is sure to spoil the whole piece. According to the ornamental gilt work, the bracelets bear various names such as *gokhru, tarunj* etc. Coconut shell and ivory bracelets are also made in Jaipur as well as at Uaipur and Pali in Mewar.

## Enamel Work

Another beautiful art of manufacture is enamel work. In bygone days, Banaras formed the cradle of this art, whence it was borrowed at Jaipur. Nearly thirty years after the foundation of of this city, enamellists settled here but their art did not then make any progress. During the last seventy-five years, however it has acquired widespread fame, and has surpassed the reputation of Banaras.

The Jaipur enamelling is *champleve*. The following is a brief description of the process. On the back of a golden ornament, the representation of any object is drawn with a style, and the lines marked are well polished by another style until they acquire a perfect gloss and make the figure visible. Enamel dust is put into the lines and cavities, thus, formed. The ornament is then placed in a red hot furnace of triangular shape having two openings, one above and the other in front, and being lined with tin, the wiring is done with use of charcoal. A proportionate heat is applied to it, until the dust melts and is diflused equally through the cavities and lines. The piece is, then, burnished with a wet stone, which resembies blue copper in colour. This process is repeated, if necessary, until the work receives a perfect polish. This art is, at present, in the highest degree of perfection here. Besides Jaipur enamelling is carried out in Nathdwara and Pratapgarh. In Jaipur this work was done in gold but in Pratapgarh it is prepared on glass. This art was brought by the Persians here in Jaipur in early 18th century.

Kundan work is closely connected with enamel work. This is the art of setting precious stones in gold. According to tradition this originated in Delhi, and has flourished during the last seventy years. The stones, to be set in a ring or necklace, are first cut and modelled to the shape of the holes prepared for them. The ring is attached firmly by warm shellac to the top of the wooden handle called *hundi*, and the hole in the ring is lined with a preparation consisting of black sulphate of antimony and *chapri* or sealing wax. The ring is made a little warm and the jewel is placed in the hole. The heat causes the lining to expand and melt, and when it cools, the jewel is firmly set.

The excess of composition round the jewels is scratched away by a style: fine gold is sprinkled over the exposed edge, and pricked in until it displaces the whole of the prepared wax. The line is then highly polished. This is called simple kundan work.

**Lapidary**

Jaipur has been famous for artisans specialising in the cutting of precious and semi-precious stones. The design and the way the jewels are cut in Jaipur, represents the admixture of Moghul and Rajput style. The ornaments used by men and women were massive and required gems, which would be of the right size when set in them. The cutting of gems was to the minimum so as to exhibit the fabulous worth rather than the delicate handiwork of the setter or cutter. Gems were orded to to be cut in a way that exhibited the body of the jewel the most.

With the change in taste and style when delicacy and lightness took the place of massiveness, the cutting and shaping of jewels at Jaipur improved. It now began discovering new ways and means which could enhance the colour and lustre of the stone at its best. After the decline of Moghuls, Jaipur flourished side by side with Delhi and Banaras as centres where jewels were skilfully cut and set to the taste of the customers. New techniques of cutting and polishing were evolved.

After the partition of the country in 1947 Banaras and Delhi lost many of their artisans but Jaipur retained its tradition. The cutting and processing of precious stones is an important handicrafts in Jaipur. It is mostly the Muslims who are masters of this art.

As opposed to the modern equipment employed by European lapidaries Jaipur worker use simple tools but in spite of that the dexterity and skill that he displays in the work is striking and his accuracy in cutting evenly measured angles to exhibit the colour and lustre to the maximum is remarkable.

The first process of work is to assort precious and semi-precious stones and then to cut them in the required forceps.' The artisan uses a stone lap, which he turns by means of a bow when he sits on the floor. The string of this bow works as the drawing device. By the side of the artisan remains a bowl containing emery, the consistency of which is adjusted by admixture with water before being used for the grinding purpose. The left hand of the artisan holds the gemstone to be fashioned. Gem stones are first slit by means of a thin disc of relatively soft metal, whose edge is slightly indented. The cut piece is then cemented to a wooden stick for rough shaping against an emery or carborundum wheel. Having charged the lap with appropriate abrasive, the lapidary grinds first the table fecets. The other facets to their correct proportion and angles are ground according to the design of the required cut. After the cutting is complete, the stone is polished The master-craftsmanship now plays his part by correcting slight irregularity in proportions left by the cutter. The polish imparts a brilliant finish. which makes it ready for sale.

**Metalware**

Rajasthan is known for the engraving and carving of iron, steel, brass and copper. Until some years ago, the best work in the field was done in this part of country.

Though the history of bronzes in Rajasthan goes as far back as the late Gupta period and to this period are ascribed the Jaina images displayed at present in the Jaina temple at Pindwara, the Jaina bronzes continued to be produced in difrerent parts of Rajasthan right from the 11th century down to the present day in *cire perdue* process.

Embossing of brass, gold and silver-plated work was prepared with a high degree of skill in the nineteenth century.

Gangabux Khati was its best worker, then in Jaipur. The three decorative shields depicting Ramayan and Mahabharat scenes and also anecdotes related to the Asvamedha sacrifice resorted to by Chakravarati ruler are superb examples of this technique. Besides this technique the others practised in Jaipur are hammered, repousse, and chased. In some salvers colour enamelling work has also been resorted to. This type of work was done on a large scale in the 19th century and continued to be practised till today. This Minakari work on metal flourished at Jaipur and Alwar.

Jaipur in Rajasthan is known also for engraved brassware with the familiar motifs of flowers, landscapes and jungle scenes. In Jaipur the engraving is done in three styles—

( a ) Chikan—a piece of bold floral decoration which stands out against the chased and lacquered surface.

( b ) Marori-minute lacquered patterns covering the surface.

( c ) Bichi-minute leaves and flowers covering the entire surface which is chased and lacquered.

In metal inlay work of damascened type—Zarnishan ( embossed work ) Tarkashi ( inlay of wire ) Tahi-nishan ( overlay of sheet silver ) are the three popular kinds of workmanship produced in Jaipur. This art was brought to Jaipur by the Persians and it died a natural death in the absence of patronage in the 20th century.

### Steel arms

Rajasthan, being the land of chivalry. offered a great scope for the worker in this field. Thousands of arms in the collection of State museums are a reminder of their skill. Two peculiarly Rajput weapons, the Katar ( short dagger with horizontal handle between the two vertical bars ) and the gauntlet ( pata ) were first introduced during the service of the Rajput princess with the Moghuls. It is reported that in the second half of the 15th century Muslim arms and armour were adopted by the Rajput chiefs. Among the typical Rajput weapons may be mentioned spearheads, elephant goads and long battle axes. Arrow heads produced in Rajasthan are like miniature spearheads, with and without barbs, or half moon or flower shaped. Sirohi was the important centre for the manufacture of arms in Rajasthan.

### Pottery

Pottery is the oldest handicrafts in India. It comes to be practised here from proto-historic times, to which period are ascribed the pottery discovered from Kalibangan area as a result of excavations.

The Rajasthani potter displays great skill in giving form and design to pots and supplies to people infinite variety of useful pottery. At Alwar in Rajasthan the pottery is made of such a thin layer of clay that is called Kagazi (paper). Following Persian models Jaipur produces glazed pottery of floral designs in blue and white. This type of pottery technique was imported by Jaipur from Delhi and Multan. Painted pottery is produced in Kotah. The gold lacquered pottery is produced in Bikaner. The designs are done on white-chalk like surface in this pottery. These are not articles of daily use but only decorative objects. Bikaner pottery is sometimes coated with many layers of differently coloured lac and the colours can be seen through the patterns. Glazed pottery of Jaipur and gold lacquered pottery of Bikaner go back in point of antiquity to the late 18th century.

### Hand-made paper

Prior to the establishment of British commerce, all legal deeds, documents, decrees, books and manuscripts were written on hand-made paper. The paper is of four kinds—Sanganeri, Sawai Madhopuri, Isri Singhahahi and Jehangiri.

### Camel hide-work

Camel has been called 'a ship of the desert' and is the only means of transport for men and his belongings in Marwar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer areas of Rajasthan. In Bikaner the camelhide is used for turning out water and oil containers. For decorative purposes, these objects were decorated with designs either from thin layers of skin and pasted on the surface of the pots or embossed with floral patterns, which were coloured and plated with thin gold leaves. The queer half moon shape of the water bottles and powder flasks is a natural development of the camel's stomachs from which in many cases they are made.

Only one or two families practise this industry in Bikaner today. This art began to be practised in the time of Maharaja Gaj Singh of Bikaner and was at its zenith in the early part of the present century.

## Ivory work

Though Mysore and Travancore are famous for workmanship in ivory carving, Bharatpur, Jaipur and Udaipur are also important centres for ivory carving in Rajasthan. Carved images of mythological interest, scenes from contemporary life, combs, chess, sets and toys are produced in ivory in Rajasthan. Hand-fan with the ground of mats from strips of ivory wares introduced in Moghul times (17th century) and was at its zenith in Maharaja Ram Singh's period. It was brought to Rajasthan by Delhi workmen.

## Wood carving

Throughout India, the tradition of wood carving is an old one. Ornately carved wooden doors can still be seen in Shekhawati and Bikaner. The outstanding examples are the floral designs adorning the projected niches and balconies of houses. In some of the old palaces in Rajasthan, carved figures are used in the brackets. Brass inlay and wooden doors are also very intricately worked. This type of work was begun in Rajasthan in the eighteenth century and is still in practice in some parts of Rajasthan.

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1. Based on a Radio-talk of Shri A. K. Roy.
2. Ibid.
3. M. Prabhakar, Rajasthan's Art treasures, Patriot Daily (Delhi) dated 7th Dec. 1969.
4. The author is indebted to Dr. Satya Prakash for this material on Handidrafts reproduced from Marg quarterly.

# Appendices

# Appendix I

## POPULATION PICTURE OF RAJASTHAN

### ( Provisional Figures, 1971 Census )

| State/District | Males | Females | Total Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| RAJASTHAN | 13,442,056 | 12,282,086 | 25,724,142 |
| 1. Ganganagar | 743,060 | 650,324 | 1,393,384 |
| 2. Bikaner | 299,886 | 272,351 | 572,237 |
| 3. Churu | 447,600 | 425,235 | 872,835 |
| 4. Jhunjhunun | 474,408 | 447,229 | 921,637 |
| 5. Alwar | 730,819 | 651,666 | 1,382,485 |
| 6. Bharatpur | 809,489 | 679,928 | 1,489,417 |
| 7. Sawai Madhopur | 638,711 | 553,807 | 1,192,518 |
| 8. Jaipur | 1,310,672 | 1,167,202 | 2,477,874 |
| 9. Sikar | 528,709 | 510,894 | 1,039,603 |
| 10. Ajmer | 599,161 | 546,766 | 1,145,927 |
| 11. Tonk | 327,576 | 297,914 | 625,490 |
| 12. Jaisalmer | 91,433 | 74,953 | 166,386 |
| 13. Jodhpur | 603,181 | 545,274 | 1,148,455 |
| 14. Nagaur | 647,512 | 611,935 | 1,259,447 |
| 15. Pali | 493,257 | 471,597 | 964,854 |
| 16. Barmer | 411,118 | 365,218 | 776,336 |

| State/District | Males | Females | Total Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Jalore | 345,723 | 321,916 | 667,639 |
| 18. Sirohi | 216,164 | 207,100 | 423,264 |
| 19. Bhilwara | 551,546 | 502,611 | 1,054,157 |
| 20. Udaipur | 921,215 | 887,364 | 1,808,579 |
| 21. Chittaurgarh | 489,397 | 454,902 | 944,299 |
| 22. Dungarpur | 262,181 | 266,835 | 529,016 |
| 23. Banswara | 331,143 | 323,779 | 654,922 |
| 24. Bundi | 237,624 | 210,746 | 448,370 |
| 25. Kota | 606,654 | 536,679 | 1,143,333 |
| 26. Jhalawar | 323,817 | 297,861 | 621,678 |

**( From census of India 1971,<br>Rajasthan, series 16 )**

# Appendix II

## Popular beliefs and superstitions

### Dreams

Certain articles or events when seen in dreams are believed to be auspicious and others inauspicious. The sight of a white cow, silver, lotus, Brahmin, ghee, curd and honey in the dreams is regarded as auspicious. If one dreams of sprinkling water over his head, some scene of death, the cremation of a person, sees himself swimming in water, riding an elephant, weeping, meeting a lady or some friends, these symptoms are believed to bring prosperity to the dreamer.

Falling of stars, tongue or teeth, smearing of oil, cow and dirty water are symptoms believed to bring calamity to the dreamer. If a dreamer sees a person wearing red garland with red sandle wood pasted on his forehead and riding an ass or a camel or a male buffalo and going towards south, such a man is believed to die within a few months. If the dreamer sees himself riding a dear he will have to undertake a long journey, and riding a camel he will be attacked by some disease. If he sees riding himself an elephant he will gain prosperity and if a boar, he is sure to die.

### Omens

If a man, going on his mission, happens to pass a lady on his right hand with a jar filled with water, or a pot filled with curd a deer or a dog, he is sure to gain success. The crossing of way from right to left by a partidge, a peacock, a deer and a duck is the sign of failure in the mission. Sight of three Brahmins, two

Vaishyas, four Kshatriyas and nine women is supposed to be inauspicious.

### Sneeze

The sneezing on the left hand side or towards the back at the time of sleeping or of taking bath or of taking meals is considered auspicious.

Sneezing at the time of entering into the house of another person, at the time of marriage before starting on a work and in front of a person are said to be inauspicious.

### Quivering of parts of the body

The quivering of the left side of the body of a lady and that of the right side of a man are considered auspicious. The reverse effects bring calamity. The quivering of head brings gain of land, of lips the desired object and the gain of wealth, of chest victory, and of the fore parts of the nostril results in death.

### Falling of lizard

Its falling on head brings gain of land; on the fore part of the nostril sorrow; on left hand displeasure from the government. on knee prosperity; on the forehead gain of a horse; on the right hand meeting with brother; on neck longevity; on shoulder journey and on left foot the death of a relative.

### Good and Evil Spirits

The people of the villages and in general conservative people in towns, believe in the existence and in the activities of the spirits. This belief is based upon Garud Puran and other Dharam Shastras. It is belived that after death, the soul of the deceased does not leave his house and haunts it for 12 days. By performing Pind Dan it acquires a new body and goes to Yam Lok where his record of sins and pious actions is referred to. On its basis rewards and punishment are awarded to him. The persons possessing pure soul untained by bad action gets Mukti or Moksh and, does not take-re-birth.

There are many ways to get rid of the Pret Yoni ( the life of an evil spirt ) e.g. Shradh at Gaya, pilgrimage to the holy lakes, the recitation of the holy books like Bhagwat Geeta, Ramayan, Maha Bharat etc. People with modern education do not cherish such beliefs.

## Yantras

The belief in the efficacy of Yantras or amulets called taveez in Urdu in removing the effects of evil spirits and curing certain diseases is commnn among rural people.

## Mantras

Belief in the efficacy of recitation of mantras to gain desired objects or to harm others is also common in rural areas. The mantras are used to cure disease, to remove the evil effects of ghosts and spirits, to cure snake—bite and even to inflict death. There are certain mantras by the recitation of which people can gain their desired object.

## Tantras

Certain Sadhus and Faqirs called Tantrikas are believed to possess miraculous magical powers to remove the fevers, the evil effects of ghosts, or of evil yet with the help of a tuft of peacock feathers or with a broom. There is a practice prevalent among the illiterate masses called Totkia in which certain articles likes chillies etc. are waved round the head of a patient and placed at cross roads. Anybody who happens to touch those articles is belived to catch the disease and the original patient is cured. The Hat Yogis, Oghad Panthis and Jogis are all Tantrikas who can influence the people by their wonderful application of such tantras.

The worshippers of Bherun are called Bhopas. They put on a unique type of dress to make their effects felt on others. They are found moving in the rural areas more frequently than in urban ones. Generally their dress consists of a red turban or bear headed, a rosary of corates round 'their necks, a red angarkha and also a red kachha ( shorts ) with a lathi in hand and a bag on their shoulders. They have(ashes smeared on their foreheads and distribute Bhashmi ( ashes ) to cure diseases of the people. They make use of yantras and mantras and earn their living by begging in the name of their deity Bherunji.

## Mahurat and Dishashul

Before proceeding on a journey the people at large both in the rural as well as in the urban areas, take note of the days and direction in which they like to proceed on a journey. According to the version of astrologers they avoid certain days. According to their beliefs nobody should start on a journey on Wednesday as well as on Saturday. They also avoid Amavasya and the day following. A journey to the west is forbidden on Sunday and Friday, to the east on Monday and Saturday, to the north on Tuesday and Wednesday and to the south on Thursday. In cases of emergency, they take advantage of a procedure called prasthan to avoid the evil effects. They tie a fes grains of rice, a coconut and a silver coin in a white piece of cloth and put it at some holy place as temple, a day or two before they take to their journey. This is called prasthan. When they proceed on journey they take the prasthan with them.

## Yogini

It is auspicious to keep Yogini at back, the Dishashul on the left and the moon in the front at the time of proceeding on a journey. It is also believed that particular work should be done on a particular day of the week only, e.g. the new clothes should only be put on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and not on Mondays. Hair should not be dressed on the sixth, eighth and fourteenth day of the month, and also not during Magha, Rohini, Kritika and Anuradha Nakshatras. The new shoes should not be put on Mondays. No work should be taken in hand when the moon occupies the fourth, eighth and twelth position of its Rashi. The work started on Saturday is sure to end in good result.

## Veneration of Cow

A cow is held in great veneration and is considered sacred by all the Hindus. She is styled as equivalent to mother and is worshipped on many occasions in the year, as on Gopashtami in Kartika, on Vatsya Dwadashi in Bhadwa. Her excreta (cow dung) and urine ( gau mutra ) are considered sacred. On all auspicious occasions the floors are plastered with cow dung for purification. During the ceremony of Prashchita-purification of a sinner from his sins—cow dung and gaumutra are given to the sinner to drink in the form of Panch Gavya.

## Sacred Trees

Trees and plants such as Tulsi, Peepal, Khejri, Banyan, Anwali and Bel are held sacred and worshipped on several occasions by the Hindus.

### Tulsi

There is a belief that God Krishna resides in the plants of Tulsi. The leaves of Tulsi are essential in all the items of food served before Lord Krishna for Naivedya. The decoction of Tulsi is also prepared for curing of Malaria fever. It is also used in many other ways as medicine. Rosaries are also made out of dry wood of Tulsi.

### Peepal

There is a belief that the Peepal tree is the abode of gods in the morning, but in the afternoon it becomes an abode of Praits. The people worship the tree of Peepal in the month of Baisakh for purifying themselves from the sins.

### Khejri

The Rajput Rajas used to worship Khejri tree at the time of Dashera. There was a belief that victory could be achieved by worshipping this tree.

### Banyan

This tree is worshipped on Jaishtha Budi Amavashya by the ladies. Sati Savitri worshipped this tree in order to gain more strength for maintaining the Pativrata Dharma and, therefore under this belief the ladies still worship this tree. It is also considered to be the abode of god Shanker.

### Anwali

It is worshipped on Kartik Shukla Navami. It is believed that Lord Krishna resides in it, and the garland of Anwalis is very much liked by god Krishna.

### Bel

The leaves of a beeli tree are offered to god Shanker in the month of Shrawan. There are generally three leaves in every twig of this tree but sometimes there are five and even seven. It is believed that God Shanker is very much pleased if one offers bel patras of five or seven leaves.

### Sacred Days

Ekadashi or the eleventh day of each fort night is regarded as the most sacred day of the month. It is believed that if a man passes away on this day he goes to heaven.

### Oaths

Oaths common for all Hindus are of Ganga Mata or of cow, and for Muslims that of Quran. Oaths are also taken of relatives vtz. father, mother, children, husband, sister or brother.

**( Extracts from Rajasthan District Gazetter )**

# Appendix III

## James Tod on Festivals of Rajasthan

The opening of the spring being on the 5th of the month Magha, is thence called the Vasant Panchami, which in 1819 fell on the 30th of January; consequently the first of Posh ( the antecedent month ), the beginning of the old Hindu year or, "the morning of the gods", fell on the 25th of December. The Vasant continues forty days after the Panchami, or initiative fifth, during which the atmost license prevails in action and in speech; the lower classes regale even to intoxication on every kind of stimulating confection and spirituous beverage, and the most respectable individuals, who would at other times be shocked to utter an indelicate allusion, roam about with the groups of bacchanals, reciting stanzas of the warmest description in praise of the powers of nature. In this season, when the barries of rank are thrown down, and the spirit of democracy is let loose, though never abused, even the wild Bhil, or savage Mer, will leave his forest or mountain shade to mingle in the ravelries of the capital; and decorating his ebon hair or tattered turban with a garland of jessamine, wil join the clamorous parties which perambulate the streets of the capital. These orgies are, however, reserved for the concluslon for the forty days sacred to the goddess of nature.

Two days following the initiative fifth is the bhan septimi or seventh ( day ) of the sun,' also called 'the birth ol the sun,' with various other metaphorical danominations. On this day there is a grand procession of the Rana, his chiefts and vassals, to the Chougan, where the sun is worshipped. At the Jeipoor court, whose princes claim, descent from CUSH, the second son of RAMA, the bhan septimi is peculiarly sacred. The chariot of the sun, drawn by eight horses, is taken from the temple dedicated to the orb, and moves in procession: a ceremony otherwise never observed but on the inauguration of a new prince.

(p. 449 )

The merry month of Phalgun is ushered in with the Ahairea, or springhnt. The preceding day the Rana distributes to to all his chiefs and servants either a dress of green or some portion thereof, in which all appear habited on the morrow, whenever the astrologer has fixed the hour for sallying forth to slay the boar to Gouri, the Ahairea is therefore called the Muhoorut ca sikar, or the chasa fixed astrologically. As their success on this occasion is ominous of future good, no means are neglected to secure it, either by scouts previously discovering the lair, or the desperate efforts of the hunters to slay the boar when roused. With the sovereign and his sons all the chiefs sally forth, each on his best steed, and all animated by the desire to surpass each other in acts of prowess and dexterity. It is very rate that in some one of the passess or recesses of the valley the hog is not found; the spot is then surrounded by the hunters, whose vociferations soon start the d'hokra, and frequently a drove of hogs. Then each cavlier impels his steed, and with lance or sword, regardless of rock, ravine, or tree, presses on the bristly foe, whose knowledge of the country is of no avail when thus circumvented, and the ground soon reeks with gore, in which not unfrequently is mixed that of horse of rider. On the last occasion, there occurred fewer casualties than usual; though the Chondawut Hamira, whom we nicknamed the "Red River", had hig leg broken, and the seeond son of Sheoden Singh, a near relation of the Rana, had his neighbour's lance driven through his arm. The young chief of Saloombra was amongst the distinguished of this day's sport. It would appeal even an English fox-hunter to see the Rajpoot driving their steeds at full speed, bounding like the antelope over every barrier,—the thick jungle covert, or rockey steep bare of soil or vegetation,--with their lances balanced in the air, or leaning on the saddle-bow slashing at the boar. ( p. 451 )

The royal kitchen moves out on this occasion, and in some chosen spot the repast is prepared, of which all partake, for the hog is the favourite food of the Rajpoot. Nor is the munwar piala or invitation cup, forgotton; and having feasted, and thrice slain their bristly antagonist, they return to the capital, where fame had alreaby spread their exploits,—the deeds done by the *birchi* (lance) of Pudma, or the *khanda* ( sword ) blow of Hamira, which lopped the head of the foe of *Gouri*. ( pp. 451-452 )

As Phalgun advances, the bacchanalian mirth increases; groups are continually patrolling the streets, throwing a crimson powder at each other, or ejecting a solution of it from syringes, so that the garments and visages of all are one mass of crimson. On the 8th, emphatically called the *Phag* the Rana joins the queens and their attendents in the palace, when all restraint is removed and mirth is unlimited. But the most brilliant sight is the playing of the *holi* on horse back. on the terrace in front of the palace. Each chief who chooses to join has a plentiful supply of missiles, formed of thin plates of mica or talc, enclosing this crimson powder, called *abira*, which with the most graceful and dextrous horsemanship they dart at each other, pursuing, caprioling. and jesting. The last day or *Poonum* ends the *holi*, when the Nakarras from the *Tripolia* summoe all the chiefs with their retinues to attend their prince, and accompany him in procession to the Chougan. In the centre of this is a long *sala* or hall, the ascent to which is by a flight of steps: the roof is supported by square columns without any walls, so that the court is entirely open. Here, surrounded by his chiefs, the Rana passes an hour, listening to the songs is praise of *Holica*, while a scurrilous *cavya* or couplet from some wage in the crowd reminds him, that exalted rank is no protection against the license of the spring Saturnalia. While the Rana and his chiefs are thus amused above, the buffoons and itinerant groups mix with the cavalcade, throw powder in their eyes, or deluge their garments with the crimson solution. To resent it would only expose the sensitive party to be laughed at, and draw upon him a host of these bacchanals: so that no alternative exists between keeping entirely aloof or mixing in the fray. ( pp. 452-453 )

On the last day, the Rana feasts his chiefs, and the camp breaks up with the distribution of *khanda nareal,* or swords and coco-nuts, to the chiefs and all "whom the king delighteth to honour," These *khandas* are but "of lath," in shape like the Andrea Ferrara, or long cut-and-thrust, the favourite weapon of the Rajpoot. They are painted in various ways, like Harlequin's sword, and meant as a burlesque, in unison with the character of the day, when war is banished, and the multiplication, not the destruction, of man is the behest ot the goddess who rules the spring. At nightfall, the forty days conclude with *"the burning of the holi,"* when they light large fires, into which various substances, as well as the crimson *abira,* the thrown, and around which groups of children are dancing and screaming in the streets like so many infernals. Until three hours after sunrise of the new month of Cheyt, rhese orgies are continued with increased vigour, when the native bathe, change their garments, worship, and return to the rank of sober citizens; and princes and chiefs receive gifts from their domestics. ( p. 453 )

## Cheyt

The first of this month is the Samvatsiri (vulg. *Chamchari*), or anniversary of the death of the Rana's father, to whose memory solemn rites are performed both in the palace and at *Ara*, the royal cemetery, metaphorically termed 'Maha Sati,' or place of *'great faith.'* Thither the Rana repairs and offers oblations to the *manes* of his father; and aftet purifying in the *Gangabheva*, a rivulet which flows through the middle of "the abode of silence," he returns to the palace.

On the 3rd, the whole of the royal insignia proceeds to Baidla, the residence of the Chohan chief ( one of *sixteen* ), within the valley of the capital, in order to convey the Rao to court. The Rana advances to the *Ganesh Deori* to receive him; when, after salutation, the sovereign and his chief return to the great hall of assembly, hand in hand, but that of the *Chohan above or upon his sovereign's*. In this ceremony we have another singular memorial of the glorious days of Mewar, when almost every chieftain established by deeds of devotion a right to the eternal gratitude of their princes. ( p. 453 )

*Cheyt budi sath*, or '7th of Cheyt' is in honour of the goddess *Sitla*, the protectress of children: all the matrons of the city proceed with their offerings to the shrine of the goddess, placed upon the very pinnacle of an isolated hill in the valley.

Cheyt *Sudi* 1st ( 15 of the month ) is the opening of the *luni-solar* year of Vicramaditya. Ceremonies, which more especially appertain to the *Noratri* of Asoj, are performed on this day; and the sword is worshipped in the palace. But such rites are subordinate to those of the fair divinity, who still rules over this the smiling portion of the year. Vassanti has ripened into the fragrant Flora, and all the fair of the capital, as well as the other sex, repair to the gardens and groves, where parties assemble, regale and swing, adorned with chaplets of roses, jessamine or oleander, when the Nolakhu gardens may vie with the Tivoli of Paris. They return in the evening to the city.

*"The Festival of Flowers."*—The Rajpoot Floralia ushers in the rites of the beneficent Gouri, which continue nine days, the number sacred to the creative power.

## Gangore

Among the many remarkable festivals of Rajast'han, kept with peculiar brilliancy at Oodipoor, is that in honour of *Gouri*. Like the Rajpoot Saturnalia, which it follows, is belongs to the vernal equinox, when nature in these regions proximate to the tropic is in the full expanse of her charms, at the matronly Gouri casts her golden mantle over the beauties of the verdant Vassanti. Then the fruits exhibit their promise to the eye; the kohil fills the ear with melody; the air is impergnated with aroma, and the crimson poppy contrasts with the spikes of golden grain, to form a wreath for the beneficent Gouri. ( p. 454 )

*Gouri* is one of the names of Isa or Parvati, wife of the greatest of the gods, Mahadeva or Iswara, who is conjoined with her in these rites, which almost exclusively appertain to the women. The meaning of *gouri* is 'yellow.' emblematic of the ripened harvest. when the votaries of the goddess adore her effigies, which are those of a matron painted the colour of ripe corn; and though her image is represented with only two hands, in one of which she holds the lotos, yet not unfrequently they equip her with the warlike conch, the discus, and the club, to denote that the goddess, whose gifts sustain life, is likewise accessary to the loss of it: uniting as Gouri and Cali, the character of life and death. But here she is only seen as *Ana-purana*, the benefactress of mankind. The rites commence when the sun enters Aries ( the opening of the Hindu year ), by a deputation to a spot beyond the city, "to bring *earth* for the image of Gouri. When this is formed, a smaller one of Iswara is made, and they are placed together; a small trench is then excavated, in which barley is sown; the ground is irrigated and artificial heat supplied till the grain germinates, when the females joins hands and dance round it, invoking the blessings of Gouri on their husbands. The young corn is then taken up, distributed, and presented by the females to the men, who wear it in their turbans. Every wealthy family has its images, or at least every poorwa or subdivision of the city. These and other rites known only to the initiated, having been performed for several days within doors, they decorate the images, and prepare to carry them in procession to the lake. During these days of preparation, nothing is talked of but Gouri's departure from the palace; whether she will be as sumptuously apparelled as in the year gone by; whether in additional boat will be lunched on the occasion; though not a few forget the goddess altogether in the recollection of tha gazelle eyes ( *mirg-naeni* ) and serpentine locks ( *nagni-zoolf* ) of the beauteous handmaids who are selected to attend her. At length the hour arrives, the marital nakaras give the signal "to the cannonier without," and speculation is at rest when the guns on the summit of the castle of Eklinggurh announce that Gouri has commenced her excursion to the lake. ( pp. 454-455 )

The cavalcade assembles on the magnificent terrace, and the Rana, surrounded by his nobles, leads the way to the boats. The scenery is admirably adpated for these fetes, the ascent being gradual from the margin of the lake, which here forms a fine day and gently rising to the crest of the ridge on which the palace and dwellings of the chiefs are built. Every turret and balcony is crowded with spectators, from the palace to the water's edge; and the ample flight of marble steps which intervene from the *Tripolia*, or triple portal, to the boats, is a dense mass of females in variegated robes, whose scarfs but half conceal their ebon tresses adorned with the rose and the jessamine. A more imposing or more exhilarating sight cannot be imagined than the entire population of a city thus assembled for the purpose of rejoicing; the countenance of every individual, from the prince to the peasant, dressed in smiles. Carry the eye to heaven, and it rests on "a sky without a cloud" : below is a magnificent lake, the even surface of the deep blue waters broken only by palaces of marble, whose arched piazzas are seen through the foliage of orange groves, plantain and tamarind; while the vision is bounded by noble mountains, their peaks towering over each other, and composing an immense amphitheatre. Here the deformity of vice intrudes not; no object is degraded by inebriation : no tumultuous disorder or deafening clamour, but all await patiently, with eyes directed to the *Tripolia*, the appearance of Gouri. At length the procession is seen winding down the steep, and in the midst, borne on a *pat'h*, or throne, gorgeously arrayed in yellow robes, and blazing with "barbaric pearl and gold," the goddess appears; on either side the two beauties wave the silver *chamra* over her head, while the more favoured damsels act as harbingers, preceding her with wands of silver: the whole chanting hymns. On her approach, the Rana, his chiefs and ministers rise and remain standing till the goddess is seated on her throne close to the water's edge, when all bow, and the prince and court take their seats in the boats. The females then form a circle around the goddess, unite hands, and with a measured step and various graceful inclinations of the body, keeping time by beating the palms at particular cadences, move round the image singing hymns, some in honour of the goddess of abundance. others on love and chivalry ; and embodying little episodes of national achievements, ocassionally sprinkled with *double entendre*, which excites a smile and significant nod from the chiefs and an inclination of the head of the fair choristers. The festival being entirely female, not a single male mixed in the immense groups, and even Iswara himself, the husband of Gouri, attracts no attention, as appears from his ascetic or mendicant form begging his dole from the bounteous and universal *mother*. It is taken for granted that the goddess is occupied in bathing all the time she remains, and ancient traditions says death was the penalty of any male intruding on these solemnities ; but the present prince deems them so fitted for amusement, that he has even instituted a second *Gangore*. Some hours are thus consumed, while easy and good-humoured conversation is carried on. At length, the ablutions over, the goddess is taken up, and conveyed to the palace with the same forms and state. The Rana and his chiefs then unmoor their boats, and are rowed round the margin of the lake, to visit in succession the other images of the goddess, around which female groups are chanting and worshipping, as already described, with which ceremonies the evening closes, when the whole termintes with a grand display of fire works, the *finale* of each of the three days dedicated to Gouri. ( pp. 455-456 )

In the festival of Gangore, as before mentioned, Iswara yields to his consort Gouri, and occupies an unimportant position near her at the water's edge, meanly clad, smoking intoxicating herbs, and whether by accident or design, holding the stalk of an onion in full blossom as a mace or club. ( p. 458 )

Whoever desires to witness one of the most imposing and pleasing of Hindu festivals, let him repair to Oodipoor, and behold the rites of the lotus-queen Pudma, the Gouri of Rajasthan. ( p. 459 )

Cheyt ( *Sudi* ) 8th, which, being after the *ides* is the 23rd of the month, is sacred to *Devi*, the goddess of every tribe ; she is called *Asocashtami,* and being the ninth night ( *noratri* ) from the opening of their Floralia, they perform the *homa,* or sacrifice of fire. On this day, a grand procession takes place to the *Chougan,* and every Rajpoot worships his tutelary divinity.

Cheyt Sudi 9th is the anniversary of Rama, the grand beacon of the solar race, kept with great rejoicings at Oodipoor. Horses and elephants are worshipped, and all the implements of war. A procession takes place to the Chougan and the succeeding day, called the *Dussera* or tenth, is celebrated in Asoj.

The last days of spring are dedicated to *Camdeva,* the god of love. The scorching winds of the hot season are already beginning to blow, when Flora droops her head, and "the god of love turns anchorite;" yet the rose continues to blossom, and affords the most fragrant chaplets for the Rajpootnis, amidst all the heats of summer. Of this the queen of flowers, the jessamine ( *chameli* ), white and yellow, the mogra, the champaca, that flourish in extreme heat, the ladies form garlands, which they twine in their dark hair, weave into bracelets, or wear as pendent collars. There is no city in the East where the adorations of the sex to *Camdeva* are more fervent than in "the city of the rising sun" ( *Udyapura* ). On the 13th and 14th of the Chyet they sing hymns handed down by the sacred bards :—

"Hail, god of the flowery bow ! hail, warrior with a fish on the banner! hail, powerful divinity, who causeth the firmness of the sage to forsake him!"

"Glory to Madana, to Cama, the god of gods ; to Him by whom Bramha, Vishnu, Siva and Indra are filled with emotions of rapture!"—*Bhavishya Purana.*

*Vysakh*—There is but one festival in this month of any note, when the grand procession denominated the "*Nakarra ca aswari*" ( from the equestrians being summoned, as already described, by the grand kettledrums from the Tripolia ), takes place ; and this is against the canons of the Hindu church, being instituted by the present Rana in S. 1847, a memorable year in the calendar. It was in this year, on the 2nd of Vysakh, that he commanded a repetition of the rites of Gouri, by the name of the *Little Gangore*; but this act of impiety was marked by a sudden rise of the waters of the Peshola, the bursting of the huge embankment, and the inundation of the lake's banks, to the destruction of one third of the capital. But although the superstitious look grave, and add that a son was also taken from him on this very day, yet the Rana persists in maintaining the fete he established; the barge is manned, he and his chiefs circumnavigate the Peshola, regale on majaom, and terrify Varuna ( the water god ) with the pyrotechnic exhibitions. ( pp. 459-460 )

*Sawan*, classically *Sravana*. There are two important festivals, with processions, in this month.

The third emphatically "the teej" ( third ), is sacred to the mountain goddess Parvati, being the day on which, after long austerities, she was reunited to Siva: she accordingly declared it holy, and proclaimed that whoever invoked her on that day should possess whatever was desired. The teej is accordingly reverenced by the women, and the husbandmen of the Rajasthan, who deems it a most favourable day to take possession of land, or to reinhabit a deserted dwelling. ( p. 461 )

Red garments are worn by all classes on this day, and at Jeipoor clothes of this colour are presented by the Raja to all the chiefs. At that court the teej is kept with more honour than at Oodipoor. An image of Parvati on the teej, richly attired, is borne on a throne by women chanting hymns, attended by the prince and his nobles. On this day fathers present red garments and stuffs to their daughters.

On this festival, at Oodipoor, as well as throughout India, they strew particular plants about the threshold to prevent the entrance of reptiles. ( p. 462 )

Rakhi—This festival, which is held on the last day of Sawun, was instituted in honour of the good genii. When Durvasa the sage instructed Salone ( the genius or nymph presiding over the month of Sawun ) to bind on *rakhis*, or bracelets, as charms to avert evil. The ministers of religion and females alone are privileged to bestow these charmed wristbands. The ladies of Rajasthan either by their handmaids or the family priests, send a bracelet as the token of their esteem to such as they adopt as brothers, who return gifts in acknowledgement of the honour. The claims thus acquired by the fair are far stronger than those of consanguinity. Sisters also present their brothers with clothes on this day, who make an offering of gold in return.

This day is hailed by the Brahmins as indemnifying them for their expenditure of silk and spangles, with which they decorate the wrists of all who are likely to make a proper return.

( p. 363 )

Karga S'hapna, *Worship of the sword*. The festival in which this imposing rite occurs is the *Noratri* sacred to the god of war, commencing on the first of the month Asoj. It is essentially martial, and confined to the Rajpoot, who on the departure of the monsoon finds himself at liberty to indulge his passion whether for rapine or revenge, both which in these tropical regions are necessarily suspended during the rains. Arguing from the order of the passions, we may presume that the first objects of emblematic worship were connected with war, and we accordingly find the highest reverence paid to arms by every nation of antiquity.

( p. 464 )

On the 1st of Asoj, after fasting, ablution, and prayer on the part of the prince and his household, the double-edged *khanda* is removed from the hall of arms ( *awadsala* ), and having received the homage ( *pooja* ) of the court, it is carried in procession to the *Kishanpol* ( gate of Kishen ), where it is delivered to the *Raj Jogi*, the *Mehunts*, and band of *Jogis* assembled in front of the temple of Devi *'the goddess'*, adjoining the portal of Kishen. By these, the monastic militant adorers of Heri, *the god of battle*, the brand emblematic of the divinity is placed on the alter before the image of his divine consort. At three in the afternoon the *nakarras*, or grand kettledrums, proclaim from the Tripolia the signal for the assemblage of the chiefs with their retainers; and the Rana and his cavalcade proceed direct to the stables, when a buffalo is sacrificed in honour of the war-horse. Thence the procession moves to the temple of Devi, where the Raja Crishen ( *Godi* ) has preceded. Upon this, the Rana seats himself close to the *Raj Jogi*, presents two pieces of a silver and a coconut, performs homage to the sword ( *karga* ), and returns to the palace. ( pp. 465-466 )

Asoj 2nd. In similar state he proceeds to the Chougan, their *Champ de Mars*, where a buffalo is sacrificed; and on the same day another buffalo victim is felled by the nervous arms of a Rajpoot, near the *Torun-pol*, or triumphal gate. In the evening the Rana goes to the temple of AMBA MATA, the universal mother, when several goats and buffaloes bleed to the goddess.

The 3rd. Procession to the Chougan, when another buffalo is offered; and in the afternoon five buffaloes and two rams are sacrificed to *Harsid Mata*.

On the 4th, as on every one of the nine days, the first visit is to the *Champ de Mars* : the day opens with the slaughter of a buffalo. The Rana proceeds to the temple of Devi, when he worships the sword, and the standard of the *Raj Jogi*, to whom, as the high-priest of Siva, *the god of war*, he pays homage, and makes offering of sugar, and a garland of roses. A buffalo having been previously fixed to a stake near the temple, the Rana sacrifices him with his own hand, by piercing him from his travelling throne (raised on men's shoulders and surrounded by his vassals) with an arrow.

On the 5th, after the usual sacrifice at the Chougan, and an elephant fight, the procession marches to the temple of *Asapurna* (Hope); a buffalo and a ram are offered to the goddess adored by all the Rajpoots, and the tutelary divinity of the Chohans. On this day, the lives of some victims are spared at the intercession of the Nuggur-Seth, or chief magistrate, and those of his faith, the Jains.

On the 6th, the Rana visits the Chougan, but makes no sacrifice. In the afternoon, prayers and victims to Devi; and in the evening the Rana visits *Bikhiari Nath*, the chief of the *Kanfara Jogis*, or split-ear ascetics.

The 7th. After the daily routine at the Chougan, and sacrifices to Devi ( the goddess of destruction ), the chief equerry is commanded to adorn the steeds with their new caparisons, and lead them to be bathed in the lake. At night, the sacred fire (*hom*) is kindled, and a buffalo and a ram are sacrificed to Devi; the Jogis are called up and feasted on boiled rice and sweetmeats. On the conclusion of this day, the Rana and his chieftains visit the hermitage of Sukria Baba, an anchorite of the Jogi sect.

8th. There is the *homa*, or fire sacrifice in the palace. In the afternoon, the prince, with a select cavalcade, proceeds to the village of Sameena, beyond the city walls, and visits a celebrated Gosaen.

9th. There is no morning procession. The horses from the royal stables, as well as those of the chieftains, are taken to lake, and bathed by their grooms, and on returning from purification they are caparisoned in their new housings, led forth and receive the homage of their riders and the Rana bestows a largess on the master of the horse, the equerries and grooms. At three in the afternoon, the nakarras having thrice sounded, the whole state insignia, under a select band, proceed to Mount Matachil and bring home the sword. When its arrival in the court of the palace is announced, the Rana advances and receives it with due homage from the hands of the *Raj Jogi* who is presented with a khelat; while the *mehunt*, who has performed all the austerities during the nine days, has is *patera* filled with gold and silver coin. The whole of the Jogis are regaled, and presents are made to their chiefs. The elephants and horses again receive homage, and the sword, the shield and spear are worshipped within the palace. At three in the morning the prince takes repose.

( pp. 466-467 )

The 10th, or *Dussera,* is a festival universally known in India and respected by all classes, although entirely military, being commemorative of the day on which the deified Rama commenced his expedition to Lanka for the redemption of Seeta; the 'tenth of Asoj' is consequently deemed by the Rajpoot a fortunate day for warlike enterprise. The day commences with a visit from the prince or chieftain to his spiritual guide. Tents and carpets are prepared at the Chougan or Matachil mount, where the artillery is sent; and in the afternoon the Rana, his chiefs, and their retainers repair to the *field of Mars,* worship the *kaijri* tree, liberate the *niltach* or jay ( sacred to Rama ), and return amidst a discharge of guns.

11th In the morning, the Rana, with all the state insignia, the kettledrums sounding in the rear, proceeds towards the Matachil mount, and takes the muster of his troops, amidst discharges of cannon, tilting and display of horsemanship. The spactacle is imposing even in the decline of this house. The hilarity of the party, the diversified costume, the various forms, colours and decoration of the turbans, in which some have the heron plume, or sprigs from some shrub sacred to the god of war; the clusters of lances, shining matchlocks and black bucklers, the scarlet housings of the steeds, and waving pennons, recall forcibly the glorious days of the devoted Sanga, or the immortal Pertap, who on such occasions collected round the black *changi* and crimson banner of Mewar a band of sixteen thousand of his own kin and clan, whose lives were their lord's and their country's. The shops and bazzars are ornamented with festoons of flowers and branches of trees, while the costliest clothes and brocades are extended on screens, to do honour to their prince; the *torun* ( or triumphal arch ) is placed before the tent, on a column of which he places one hand as he alights, and before entering makes several circumambulations. All present offer their *nuzzur's* to the prince, the artillery fires and the bards raise "the song of praise," celebrating the glories of the past; the fame of Samra, who fell with thirteen thousand of his kin on the Caggar; of Ursi and his twelve brave sons, who gave themselves as victims for the salvation of Cheetore; of Koombha, Lakha, Sanga, Pertap, Umra, Raj. all descended of the blood of Rama, whose, exploits, three thousand five hundred years before, they are met to celebrate. The situation of Matachil is well calculated for such a spectable as indeed is the whole ground from the palace through he Delhi Portal to the mount, on which is erected one of the several castles commanding the approaches to the city. The fort is dedicated to *Maṭa*, though it would not long remain stable (*achil*) before a battery of thirty-six pounders. The guns are drawn up about the termination of the slop of the natural glacis; the Rana and his court remain on horseback half up the ascent; and while every chief or a vassal is at liberty to leave his ranks and "witch the world with noble horsemanship," there is nothing tumultuous, offensive in their mirth. (pp. 467-468)

The steeds purchased since the last festival are named, and as the cavalcade returns their grooms repeat the appellations of each as the word is passed by the master of the horse; as *Baj Raj*, 'the royal steed' Hymore, 'the chief of horses', *Manika*, 'the gem',; *Buja*, 'the thunderbolt', etc. etc. On returning to the palace, gifts are presented by the Rana to his chiefs. The Chohan chief of Kotario claims the apparel which his prince wears on this day, in token of the fidelity of his ancestor to the minor Oody Singh, in Akber's wars. To others a fillet or *balabund* or the turban is presented; but all such compliments are regulated by precedent or immediate merit. (p. 468)

The last day of the month Asoj ushers in the Hindu winter (*surd rit*). (p. 474)

On this day, nothing but white vestments and silver (*chandi*) ornaments are worn, in honour of the moon (*Chandra*) who gives his name to the

"Pale and common drudge
Tween man and man."

There is a procession of all the chiefs to the Chougan; and on their return, a full court is held in the great hall, which breaks up with "obeisance to the lamp" (*jote ca moojra*) whose light each reverences; when the candles are lit at home, every Rajput, from the prince to the owner of a "skin (chursa) of land", seated on a white linen cloth, should worship his tutelary divinity, and feed the priests with sugar and milk.

CARTICA—This month is peculiarly sacred to *Lacshmi*, the goddess of wealth, the *Juno Moneta* of the Romans. The 13th is called the *Dhunterus*. or thirteenth (day) of wealth, gold and silver coin are worshipped, as the representatives of the goddess, by her votaries of all classes, but especially by the mercantile. On the 14th, all anoint with oil, and make libations thereof to *Yama*, the judge of departed spirits. Worship (*pooja*) is performed to the lamp, which represents the god of hell, and is thence called *Yama-dewa*, the lamp of Pluto, and on this day partial illumination takes place throughout the city.

DEWALI, or *Festival of Lamps*—On the Amavus or *ides* of Cartic, is one of the most brilliant fetes of Rajasthan, called the *Dewali*, when every city, village and encampment exhibits a blaze of splendour. The potters' wheels revolve for weeks before solely in the manufacture of lamps (*dewa*) and from the palace to the peasant's hut every one supplies himself with them, in proportion to his means, and arranges them according to his fancy. Stuffs, pieces of gold, and sweetmeats are carried in trays and consecrated at the temple of Lacshmi, the *goddess of wealth*, to whom the day is consecrated. The Rana on this occasion honours his prime minister with his presence to dinner; and this chief officer of the state, who is always of the mercantile caste, pours oil into a terra-cotta lamp, which his sovereign holds; the same libation of oil is permitted by each of the near relations of the minister. On this day, it is incumbent upon every votary of Lacshmi to try the chance of the dice, and from their success in the *dewali*, the prince, the chief, the merchant, and the artisan foretell the state of their coffers for the ensuing year.

*Lacshmi*, though on festival depicted under by the type of riches, is evidently the beneficent *Annpurana* in another garb, for the agricultural community place a corn-measure filled with grain and adorned with flowers as her representative; or, if they adorn her effigies, they are those of *Padma*, the water-nymph, with a lotus in one hand, and the *pashu* ( or fillet for the head ) in the other. As Lacshmi was produced at *the Churning of the Ocean*, and hence called one of the "fourteen gems", she is confounded with *Rembha*, chief of the *apsaras*, the Venus of the Hindus. Though both were created from the froth ( *sara* ) of the waters ( *ap or up* ), they are as distinct as the representations of *riches* and *beauty* can be. Lacshmi became the wife of Vishnu, or Kaniya, and is placed at the feet of his marine couch when he is floating on the chaotic waters. As his consort, she merges into the character of Saraswati, the goddess of eloequence.

( pp. 475-476 )

To the infernal god Yama, who is 'the sun of the sun; the second day following the Amavus is also sacred; it is called the *Bhratri divitya*, or, the brothers. because the river goddess *Yamuna* on this day entertained her brother ( *bhratri* ) Yama, and is therefore consecrated to fraternal affection. At the hour of curfew ( *gaodaluk*, when the cattle return from the fields ), the cow is worshipped, the herd having been previously tended. From this ceremony no rank is exempted, on the preceding day, dedicated to Crishna, prince and peasant all become pastoral attendants on the cow, as the form of Prithwi, or the earth.

The Ist ( Sudi ), or 16th of Cartica is the grand festiva lof ANACUTA, sacred to the Hindu Ceres, which will be described with its solemnities at Nathdwara. There is a state procession, horse-races and elephant fights at the Chougan; the evening closes with a display of fireworks.

The 14th ( Sudi ), or 29th, is another soleman festival in honour of Vishnu. It is called the *Jul-jatra*, from being performed on the water ( *jul* ). The Rana, chiefs, ministers and citizens go in procession to the lake and adore the "spirit of the waters," on which floating lights are placed, and the whole surface is illuminated by a grand display of pyrotechny. On this day, *Vishnu rises from his slumber of four months :* a figurative expression to denote the sun's emerging from the cloudy months of the periodical flood.

The next day ( the *poonum,* or last day of Cartica ), being the *macara sancranti,* or autumnal equinox, when the sun enters the zodiacal sign *Macara,* or Pisces, the Rana and chiefs proceed in state to the Chougan and play at ball on horseback. The entire last half of the month Cartica, from Amavus ( *the ides* ) to the Poonum, is sacred to Vishnu ; who is declared by the *Puranas* to represent the sun and whose worship, that of water and the floating-lights placed thereon all objects emblematic of fecundity-carry us back to the point whence we started the adoration of the powers of nature ; clearly proving all mythology to be universally founded on an astronomical basis. ( pp. 476–477 )

# Appendix IV

## SONG OF MEHANDI

The mehndi is sown in a sandy place;
The love-juice of mehndi is a lovely tint,

The mehndi is watered by the river Jamuna;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi has sprouted a pair of leaves;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The grown mehndi plant looks beautiful in a bed of roses;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi is plucked by tender women;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi leaves drying in the countryard;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi is crushed by the grindstone;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi is shifted through a fine cloth;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi is soaked in a fine red bowl;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The mehndi has been painted on by the elder brother's wife,
as she sits;
The love juice of mehndi ia a lovely tint.

The sister-in-law's brother has come to see it;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

"O lady, who has painted thy hands ?
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

The hands, thy beutiful hands, are a lovely shade ;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

Put thy hand on my heart;
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

I make an offering of rubies and jewels.
The love juice of mehndi is a lovely tint.

## SONG OF THE SOLDIER'S WIFE

"There's nae luck aboot the hoose,
There's nae luck at a',
There's little pleasure in the hoose
When oor guid man's awa."

( The month of ) Srawan has come, Bhadon too,
It is raining, it is raining,
O dear one, the rain!
Do come home, now, lover of the fair one.

The thatched roof is old, husband, it is falling down,
And cracking, the old bamboos are cracking,
O dear ones, the bamboos !
Do come home, O flower of the rose.

The lightning is flashing, husband, the lightning,
And the housewife is afraid in the palace, afraid in the palace,
Yes, the young wife !
Do come home, the rainy season is good.

First of all the house is dark,
And secondly the night is dark, is dark
Yes, dear, the night!
Do come home, I am hoping so much for you.

The fair one is soaking wet, husband, in the balcony,
And the noble one is soaking wet, the noble one in the
army,
Yes, dear husband in the army!
Do come home, O cloud of the rainy season.

The horse is soaking wet, husband, the valuable
horse,
And the woollen garments are soaking wet,
Yes, dear, the woollen!
Do come home, the beloved of the fair one.

I can cross a well, dear,
But the sea cannot be crossed,
Yes, dear, it cannot be!
Do come home, flower of the rose.

If there is a letter, I can read it, dear
But I cannot read fate,
Yes, dear, it cannot be done!
Do come home therefore,—I am hoping so for your
arrival.

If there was a child, I could persuade it not to cry.
But, husband, I cannot persuade youth from passing.
Yes, dear, that cannot be done!
Do remember me, O master of the fair one.

We have been married fourteen years, husband,
I am in the full flush of youth, full of youth,
Yes, dear, full of youth!
Do come home, master of the fair one.

Dear husband, do take service nearby,
So that you may come home at sundown, at sundown,
Yes, dear, come!
Do come home, the rainy season is good.

To you is dear the service of a foreign country,
And to me you are dear, you are dear.

Yes, husband you!
Do come home, the beloved of the deer-eyed.

Your wages are only eighty rupees,
And the innocent wife is worth a hundred thousand
pieces of gold,
Yes, dear, the wife!
Do come home, O beloved of the fair one.

Service in the South is difficult, dear,
And so is the *ghat* of the Narmada river,
Yes, dear, the *ghat*!
Do come home, master of the fair one.

The bodice is too small for my young body.
And dear, the necklace is too small for my heart,
Yes, dear, many promises!
Do come home, the rainy season is good.

By counting the days the lines of my fingers are
worn off,
The lines of my fingers,
Yes, dear, the lines!
Do come home, beloved of the fair ode.

The night is covered with stars, dear,
And dear, the bed is covered with flowers,
Yes, dear, the bed!
Do come home, beloved of the fair one.

As the creepers are dependent on the trees, dear,
So are women dependent on men,
Yes, dear, the women!
Do come home, O flower of the rose.

Without you I will die, dear,
Stab myself with a knife and die,
Yes, dear, stab!
Do come home, the rainy season is good.

## SONG OF THE DRUM

The thrilling drum is played,
My brother had the skin stretched on the dur.
And my regar brought the drum,
The thrilling drum is played.

The drum is played with the fingers,
The drum is played with a ring,
The drum is played with the palm of the hand,
The thrilling drum is played.

My brother plays the drum
His companions join in singing "Dhamal".
The thrilling drum is played.

Druming, druming they went,
To the palace where the Holi is burned,
The thrilling drum is played.

The drum is played in Bikaner,
The drum is played in Jodhpur,
And the drum is played in Ajmer,
The thrilling drum is played.

## SONG OF THE BARREN WIFE

Bhairunji, I will offer you sweetmeats made of wheat
grown in the desert,
And in then I will put butter made from Cow's milk
O dweller in Kashi, hearke to my one petition.

Bhairunji, my sisters-in-law have taunted me,
In their cradles sons are being rocked,
Bhairunji, I am the only sonless one in the family.

Bhairunji, never was my bodice wet with milk,
Nor upon my shoulder did a darling son dribble,
O dweller In Kashi, hearken to my one petition.

Bhairunji, my mother-in-law has a son my dear younger
brother-in-law,
Bhairunji, my sister-in-law is fiery like the summer heat,
Bhairunji, hearken to my one petition.

Bhainruji, your bells ring in Kashi,
The bells ring in Kodamdesar,
Bhairunji of Toliyasar, hearken to my one petition.

Bhairunji, I will erect for you a plateform in my father-in-law's house,
And I will bow to you as I come in or go out,
Bhairunji, hearken to my one petition.

## SONG OF GAURI WORSHIP

Mother Gauri Gingor, open your little door,
outside are standing your worshippers.

"Worship, O Worshipping women"
We ask for a seat.

We ask for a father like the rain bearing clouds and a
precious mother;

We ask for brothers like Kanhaiya and sisters-in-law
like Rai.

We ask for brothers-in-law like Sawalio and for sisters
like Subhadra;

We ask for an uncle who will clean the earthen pots and
an aunt who will sweep.

**(Quoted from women's Folk-songs of Rajputana by L. Winifred Bryce)**

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